TO SWITZERLAND

AND BACK,

WITH

A VISIT TO MONT BLANC.

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AUTHOR TO READER.

The following pages record some of the impressions, the pleasures, and incidents of a journey to that romantic portion of central Europe, to which for so many years the summer traveller has resorted gladly as pilgrim to the shrine of his worship. From *Eliza Cook's Journal*, in which the several chapters have already appeared, they are here republished, with some alterations and less of compression, in a volume perhaps not unacceptable to those who like to spend a holiday in the mountains, or to see varieties of social life and character. For such it may prove a companion book, neither costly nor burdensome, yet not unworthy of confidence. The better to realise this end, an Itinerary is prefixed, which, presenting outlines of the route and other particulars, will enable any

one to estimate the cost of such a journey, and the exertion it involves.

The route, though new to me, is as well-known and well-travelled as any of the great thoroughfares of England. To pretend, therefore, to have seen anything new would be presumptuous: I only claim to have thought and talked in my own way about what I saw with my own eyes.

My custom is when travelling, either abroad or at home, *not* to go to what are called the best hotels; for experience has taught me that second-rate houses offer more real comfort to the wayfarer, at smaller expense. On arriving at a town I saunter about until I see an inn likely to suit me, and choose for myself. Sometimes I rough it, for the sake of seeing a humbler grade of life, and never have had occasion to repent the experiment. In the present tour I walked three hundred miles.

The smaller road-side inns and village taverns in Switzerland, are generally much more comfortable than would be supposed from their exterior. The fare is good though plain, and the beds clean—no unimportant consideration, even did not fatigue and a good appetite reconcile you to some inconveniences. In such houses

you may live for half-a-crown a day: viz.—breakfast, 6*d.*, dinner, with wine, 1*s.* 4*d.*, bed, 8*d.*; and in towns, where living is dearer, two shillings more will cover your expenses by proper management. My total outlay will be found by those who read to the end of the volume.

You will have no difficulty, under ordinary circumstances, in changing English gold in any of the countries visited. In Belgium, Switzerland, Piedmont, and France, you will get twenty-five francs, and in Prussia, six dollars twenty-five silver groschen for a sovereign. In Baden florins and kreutzers are the currency, but the Prussian coins circulate, and with them you may pay the railway fare from Mannheim to Basel. If you have any German money left on arriving in Switzerland, change it at once for francs.

Provide yourself with a Foreign Office passport before starting. Leave your name in the usual form at the Office in Downing Street, and call next day for the passport. The charge is 7*s.* 6*d.* No *visé* is required for Prussia or the Sardinian States, nor, if my experience be a proof, for Belgium. These regulations may, however, be modified by the jealousies and suspicions which follow the outbreak of hostilities.

Notwithstanding the war, there is reason to believe that the route to Switzerland will remain open. Should there be any difficulties on the Rhine, it will be easy to reverse the tour—beginning with France, then to Geneva and the Alps, and returning from Basel by the railway to Strasburg.

London, 1854.

ITINERARY.

CHAPTER I.

London to Dover, 88 miles—Dover to Ostend, 60 miles: passage about six hours; fare, fore cabin 10*s.*—Ostend, railway through Bruges, Ghent, Malines, Liège, Verviers, Aix-la-Chapelle, to Cologne, 212 miles; fare, 27*s.* first class, 10*s.* third class; refreshment-rooms at most of the stations—At Cologne, *Hotel de Holland*, near the steam boat landing: charges moderate.

CHAPTER II.

Cologne to Mainz, 125 miles, steamboat: fare, 3 dollars main-deck, 1 and 1½ dollar fore-deck; breakfast and dinner on board, 3*s.* 4*d.* —Mainz to Mannheim, 40 miles, steamer: fare, from 2*s.* to 3*s.*; hotel, *Pfälzer Hof*, charge for bed, 2*s.*: this is one of the best, but there is no lack of others with lower charges.

CHAPTER III.

Mannheim, through Heidelberg, Carlsruhe, Freiburg, to Basel, 158 miles: railway, fare, third class, 9*s.*; hotel at Basel, *The Stork.*

CHAPTER IV.

Walk from Basel through the Münsterthal to Bienne, 54 miles—Roadside inns frequent—Grellingen, *L'Ours*, charge for breakfast, 6*d.*—Lauffen—Sleep at Courrendelin—Moutiers—Court—Malloray—Tavannes, a good stopping place for the second night: inns, *Croix* and *Couronne*, both comfortable—Sonceboz—Bienne, *Hôtel du Jura*—Bienne to Berne, through Aarberg, 25 miles—Diligences between Basel and Berne daily. A *char-à-banc*, to carry from two to three persons, 12 francs a day; a *voiture*, from 20 to 25 francs, besides back fare.

CHAPTER V.

Berne: hotels, *Couronne*, *Abbaye aux Gentilshommes*: passports must be *viséd* here for France, or the Austrian dominions: the French minister's signature costs 5 francs—Berne to Thun, 17 miles; fare, *banquette*, 2*s.* 4*d.*—Thun, hotel, *Freyenhof.*

CHAPTER VI.

Thun to Neuhaus, up the lake, 10 miles; fare, 1 or 2 francs—Unterseen, 2 miles—Lauterbrunnen, 2½ hours, up the valley—Back to Unterseen—To Leisigen, 7 miles, comfortable inn—Through Aeschi, Mühlinen, Frutigen, to Kandersteg, 25 miles, inn, *White Horse*—Pass of the Gemmi—Inn at Schwaribach—To Leukerbad, 6 hours, *Hôtel de France.*

CHAPTER VII.

Leukerbad, by Imden and the Gallery, to Sierre, 3½ hours, inn, *Soleil*—Sierre, through Sion and Riddes to Martigny, 9 hours, fare, rotonde, 5*s.*; hotel, *La Cygne.*

CHAPTER VIII.

Martigny to the Hospice of St. Bernard, about 12 hours—Through Valette, Bouvernier, St. Branchier, Orsières, a decent inn, Liddes, inn, *L'Union*, St Pierre, Val d'Entremont, the Hospice.

CHAPTERS IX. & X.

From the St. Bernard to St Remy: here the Piedmontese custom-house; passport and baggage examined—St. Oyen—Etroubles—Gignod—Aosta, a descent of about 7 hours from the convent; inns, *Écu* and *Couronne*, of dubious quality; Diligences from here to Turin, omnibus to St. Didier—From Aosta through St. Pierre, Villeneuve, Ivrogne, Morgex, to Courmayeur, 25 miles, inn, *Hôtel de l'Union*—Engage a guide for next day's journey.

CHAPTER XI.

The Val d'Entrèves, to the Allée Blanche and Col de la Seigne, 5 hours—Descend to Motet in valley of Bonneval, halt and dine—Then up to the Col de Fours, across the pass, and down to Nant Bourant, another 5 hours; guide's fee, 12 francs.

CHAPTER XII.

Nant Bourant to Contamines, 1½ hours, two inns, the new one best and cheapest—To Bionnay, 1 hour—Path up the mountain through the village of Bionnassay to the pavilion on the Col de Voza: here refreshment may be had—From thence through Les Ouches to Chamonix; 5 hours from Bionnay.

CHAPTER XIII.

Chamonix—The road to the Col de Balme leads also to the source of the Arveiron and the Flegère—To go to the Montanvert, cross

the bridge in the middle of the village, leave the hotel on the right, and follow the road which runs to the left across the fields, and rises into the firwoods—To go to the Glacier des Bossons, turn to the right on crossing the bridge—Guides, 6 francs a day; a mule, 12 francs.

CHAPTER XIV.

Chamonix to Geneva: fare, 14 francs; first half of journey through Servoz to Sallenches by *voiture*, 3½ hours—Sallenches, through Cluses and Bonneville to Geneva, 36 miles, by diligence, 6 hours; hotel, *Lion d'Or*—At Annemasse, a few miles from Geneva, is the frontier of Savoy, where passports are shown; at the gate of Geneva they are given up, to be afterwards reclaimed at the Hotel de Ville.

CHAPTER XV.

Steam trip down the lake to Vevay, Chillon, or Villeneuve; eleven hours going and returning; fare, each way, 4½ francs foredeck.

CHAPTER XVI.

Geneva to Lyon by diligence, 93 miles, fare 12 francs—Lyon to Chalons, 100 miles, steamer, fare, fore deck, 6 francs—Chalons to Paris, 238 miles, fare, third class, 32 francs—Paris to Rouen and Dieppe, 125 miles, fare, third class, 14 francs—Dieppe to Newhaven, 90 miles, fore cabin, and second class rail to London, 14*s*.

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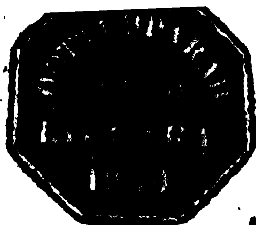
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TO MONT BLANC AND BACK AGAIN.

CHAPTER I.

"I, curre per Alpes."

"AWAY! scour the Alps." So wrote Juvenal nearly twenty centuries ago; and, like good wine, the brief but pithy phrase has lost none of its virtue by long keeping. What more healthy or more inviting injunction could be addressed to any one with an eye to see and a heart to feel, especially should he be a dweller in this great roaring, smoking city of London? To see the mountains had been a dream with me ever since my boyhood, when the sight of a panoramic view of some Alpine scenery almost struck me dumb with wondering delight, and gave me strange yearnings for a sight of the original, not unmingled with doubt as to whether it could be half so imposing or beautiful. Many years, however, passed away before there seemed even the shadow of a hope that the dream would "come true," as children say. But this year everything proved favourable for the long-anticipated expedition; and now, having seen the Alps, I am going to tell how I went, how I fared, what I saw, and what I thought of it.

If I can do all this without being prosy, so much the

better for my re[illegible] myself; and if without being prolix, so [illegible] also; but I must have leave to tell my story [illegible] way, and gallop, saunter, or lie down by the roadside, and go to sleep, just as I please. Those who object to this stipulation may skip me altogether.

Be it understood I am not one of those tourists who think their own country the last which should be explored; for pedestrian excursions of many thousand miles have made me pretty well acquainted with England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, and have given me a sort of license to see what is to be seen in foreign countries. In virtue whereof I have visited different portions of the continent; but not till this year could I get so far as Switzerland.

It is an old subject, many will exclaim, and what can be said about it that we do not already know? That remains to be seen. There is, however, a consideration that ought not to be overlooked: it is, that until recently a trip to the mountains of central Europe was a possibility and a pleasure confined to a very few, and not, as now, a something to be accomplished by thousands. It is among these thousands that I hope to find readers. How many are there who would go if they only knew the best or pleasantest way! and how many who, not able to go themselves, like, nevertheless, to travel in spirit and catch glimpses of snowy peaks in imagination! Notwithstanding certain chilling forms of modern social life, we cannot help having more or less of sympathy with our fellows; and if the scenes and incidents of my ramble pleased and interested me, may they not also please and interest others? I, for one, hope so.

It is time to begin, but I must first say a few words as to equipment. This is a matter in which I prefer to trust to my own judgment and the teachings of experience rather than to the prescription of guide-books, which too often contain items specified as "absolutely essential" that can very well be done without. My knapsack, when packed ready for the start, weighed exactly ten pounds, and lest it should be thought that I stinted myself of matters essential to cleanliness and propriety, here is a list of its contents:—two shirts, one pair of drawers, trowsers and waistcoat, three pairs of woollen socks, handkerchiefs, collars, cravats in sufficient number, brushes, comb, razor, portfolio with paper, inkstand, three or four small favourite books with which to beguile a rainy day, if necessary, *Murray's Handbook*, and Keller's map of Switzerland, and a pair of light shoes. I make my own knapsack of black waterproof linen, and with the straps it weighs less than half a pound; and thus I avoid the mistake of carrying a heavy vehicle for the transport of a few light articles. All this, with the clothes on my back, gave me quite sufficient for change and casualty. I had two coats,—woollen, but light; the overcoat I wore continuously, and strapped the other to my knapsack in fine weather, which made the total weight twelve pounds. Add to this an umbrella in a glazed case, and you have the sum of my baggage: *impediment*, as the Romans truly named it, but in my case hardly to be considered as a hindrance. I had almost forgotten a good-sized cake of old white Windsor, really an essential; for soap is one of the things not supplied to travellers on the continent either in hotels or private lodgings.

A word or two on foot-gear. I find what are called

"button boots" to be by far the best and most comfortable for a pedestrian excursion. They are easily put on or off, and by leaving two or more of the buttons unfastened the feet may be kept ventilated while walking, and the ankles relieved from pressure. Notwithstanding all recommendations to the contrary, I carefully eschew nails, except a small row round the heels. There are so many slippery places among rocks and on mountain sides that nails in the sole become exceedingly treacherous, and not unfrequently the cause of accident. It is well always to have a pair of boots in seasoning, so that every inconvenience of newness may be fairly walked out of them, before they are used for a lengthened excursion. And with respect to socks, there is nothing like merino; it is cooler than cotton in a long walk, and less irritating. My feet never complain in merino socks. For the head, a light cloth cap is by far the best covering; as must be well known to those who have ever experienced the difficulty of keeping their wide-awake or any other sort of hat from being blown away in windy weather.

Dover is a place where you may pass a day very pleasantly: there is the castle with its many interesting associations; the fortified heights, about which you may wander at will, inhaling the breeze that comes from the sea, musing on the past, present, and future, or calmly enjoying the varied prospect that presents itself from every point of view. While going up the hill to the garrison, you will see that racing down it on velocipedes is one of the recreations of the youth of Dover. Then comes the long flight of steps, a short cut though steep to the fortress, on emerging from which the tinkle of a rusty bell greets your ear. You look round, and see a

wire stretched from one of a row of grated windows in a sullen stone building on the height above, to a post near the stair, which bears written on a board a solicitation of charity for poor debtors. A box hangs under the board to receive your contributions; and no doubt all who pass are watched with eager eyes, and feelingly criticised. Will the husky tinkle find its way to the heart? is perhaps a question that passes with alternations of hope and fear, many times a day through the minds of the captives. Poor fellows! They have at all events a glorious prospect over land and sea, and that is something. You may devote the afternoon to Shakspeare's Cliff, from whence glimpses of the coast of France will reward your outlook, if the weather be fine, and where the bluff old mariner who lives near the summit, will feel proud to show you his collection of fossils, especially if you buy some of them, and taste his ginger-beer. He lends telescopes, too, to those who are not satisfied with what they see by their own unassisted eyes. After this, if there be time to spare, you may go and look at the great building works at the new Harbour of Refuge; and if you are curious in sociology, the town itself will afford a few studies in that branch of science, and you will go away with the impression that Dover will well repay a day's visit.

At eleven P.M. I went on board the Ostend steamer that lay alongside of the steamer for Calais, at the pier-head. Lights were burning in the cabins and on deck; the impatient snort and hissing from the pipes showed that the steam was well up, and the attitude of the hands at the gangway was that of lively expectation. Presently was heard a noise of wheels, the tramp of hoofs, the tread of feet, that came nearer and nearer, until at last a con-

fused throng was seen hurrying down the pier. The mail-train had arrived, and now all was eager hurry and haste for embarkation and departure. First came two or three ladies, picking their way timidly by the light of the deck-lanterns; then a rush of porters, staggering under mountains of baggage; then half a score or so of gentlemen habited in queer travelling costume, some, smooth-chinned Englishmen bound for the continent, others, moustachioed foreigners going back to their own country. These were followed by men bearing huge mail-bags, which they pitched unceremoniously down into the fore-cabin, another and another succeeding in hot haste, while passengers were thrust rudely aside, as though the mail, and nothing but the mail, were the chief object of solicitude. Then more ladies, more gentlemen, and more porters, with noisy shouts and quick exclamations, and rushings to and fro in the gleam of the lamps and the gloom of the shadows, and all producing a singularly effective and striking scene,—one which, though you are still at home, has all the charm of strangeness. At length the whiz of steam that had played a deep bass to the rapid tumult, comes to a sudden stop. "Stand by!" and "Let go!" are heard from a voice above the paddle-boxes; the two vessels speed forth into the eerie-looking void that stretches far away to seaward; the lamps and the dim figures on the pier seem to be receding into the pale darkness of a July night, and soon the throb of the paddles and the swift rush of water under the keel are the only sounds that disturb the silence.

I am one of the fortunate few who are never sea-sick, and, consequently, find a trip on the ocean a real pleasure. After walking the deck for a time I went below, and

stretching myself on a row of the carpet-seated stools, had a few brief snatches of sleep, broken by the snorings of others lying on the benches around, and the wash of the waves against the vessel's bow. It was in the fore-cabin; for I hold it to be good policy to pay as little as possible for mere transport of your person from one place to another. At four in the morning, I mounted to the deck again, and saw the Belgian coast, a long, low, uneven sandbank, bordering the horizon, and the tall, conical church tower of Ostend rising out of it far in the distance. Gradually objects on the shore became more distinct, and things which looked marvellous a long way off resolved themselves into ordinary prosaic seaside phenomena. Ere long the steamer shot between long timbered piers. At one side was a group of fishermen pushing off with their nets; on the other a guard-house, with a soldier pacing slowly up and down before it with musket and fixed bayonet; then a glimpse of fortifications and more soldiers; then a sweep into a broad basin, and the making fast to a wharf, and, giving your ticket to one official and your passport to another, you step up the plank and find yourself on shore. Here a dozen touters open upon you with clamorous praises of the hotels which they represent, some in glib French, others in doubtful English, others, again, with a mixture of both. My plan is never to believe any of them, but to go into the town and look about for myself.

Arrival at a foreign port deprives you, for a time, of control over your baggage; even my small knapsack had to go to the Custom-house amidst the mass of bags, trunks, and boxes, under escort. Thither I betook myself. Soon appeared an official in uniform, his hand full

of passports, and calling out the names as well as his knowledge or his wit permitted, he asked our names as we answered the call, our destination and age, though the latter he most frequently guessed at. He set me down at least eight years under the mark. Mine was a Foreign-office passport, and was not *viséd* for Belgium, and I was not sorry to find no objection made to it on that account. Perhaps this feeling was heightened by the fact, that there were some among the passengers who, seeing my immunity, lamented that after paying 7*s.* 6*d.* for their passports in Downing-street, they posted off to the City, and paid 3*s.* 6*d.* more to the Belgian consul for his signature; as though there could be any virtue in the autograph of a functionary who had never seen them before. What an instance it affords of the absurdity of the passport system! It would soon die, surely, were it not a source of revenue. I should not wonder if it pays the consuls' salaries, and the ambassadors', too; and so the shabby tax is more likely than not to be perpetual.

Having, however, no grievance to complain of on my own account, I went up-stairs to the *restaurant* with a contented spirit, and entered the large *salle* in which people eat, drink, wash, shave, and brush themselves, the latter operations being performed behind two paper screens stretched across two corners of the room. You go in unshaven and feeling "seedy;" and you come out with a smooth chin and the worthful consciousness which cleanliness never fails to inspire; and you sit down at the large table to breakfast with unembarrassed appetite for *café au lait*, eggs or meat, or bread and butter, and then you are ready for the long and wearisome ride to Cologne. I had furnished myself with ten shillings'

worth of francs, and the same amount of Prussian money, before leaving London, and all travellers should do the like, as it saves them from the losses attendant on getting sovereigns changed in a hurry by a foreign waiter. *Verbum sap.* So, after paying for my breakfast, I walked to the railway-station, and asked for a third-class ticket for Cologne. "There is no third-class by this train," was the answer; and it further appeared on inquiry, that there was no second either, and no possibility of getting beyond Aix-la-Chapelle, for that day at least, by third-class. I knew before starting that there was a train from Ostend at six in the morning, and we landed sufficiently early for me to have gone by it; but as everybody said it waited at Malines until the quarter-past-seven train arrived, I thought it would be the same thing to take the second departure, and congratulated myself on having a comfortable interval for refreshment, as already related. Now, however, I found out my mistake, and I inwardly resolved never to take "everybody's" word for granted again; and being desirous to avoid losing a day, I took a first-class ticket, which cost me 33 francs 75 centimes—more than twice the amount I meant to pay; and though it vexed me somewhat for the moment, I soon forgot it in the observation of novel scenes.

It seemed almost sacrilegious to pass through Bruges, Ghent, and the old historic towns of Belgium, without stopping to explore them; but I was bound for the mountains, and for the time Nature's handiwork had greater attractions for me than man's. The appearance of the country was by no means strikingly foreign, and reminded me strongly of what one sees in our midland

counties; the cottages, too, had quite an English air about them: proofs of industry were everywhere apparent, in the excellent cultivation and absence of weeds: not an inch of ground lay waste. And yet the people whose labour thus shows to good advantage will beg whenever they have a fitting opportunity. You pass a farm-house, and perhaps admire the picture of contentment it affords, an old woman or two knitting at the door, the housewife busy with domestic matters, and a man and boys apparently absorbed in husbandry work. But no sooner do they spy you, than your dream is dispelled; down go the knitting and the implements, and the whole party rush to the roadside with outstretched hands—one wants a pair of new *sabots*, another a gown, another a cap, and so on, and you are expected to contribute something towards the purchase of these articles. Of course, you refuse, and you walk away a little perplexed to account for such an illustration of mendicancy. A tricoloured flag was flying from the top of every station, because, as we found while waiting to lunch at Malines, the King was expected to pass; and his Majesty did pass very unostentatiously, and without any of those noisy acclamations that hail the approach of royalty in other countries.

At Liege the country becomes picturesque, and really worth looking at, and retains the same character all the way to Verviers. The Meuse adds a charm to the landscape, and the frequent windings of the Ourthe, and the occurrence of hills, cause a constant succession of bridges and tunnels; and all your weariness disappears at the sight of the wooded heights, the swift-flowing river, and the hanging woods. At Verviers you shift from the

Belgian to the Prussian system of railways. They do not run one into the other. I happened, unfortunately, to get into the smoking compartment of a carriage; and tobacco-smoke being an abomination to me, wished to get out again, but the conductor stopped me with "*Alles ist besetzt;*" and I had to endure the reeking atmosphere as best might be. Soon we cross the Prussian frontier, and at Herbesthal, a very military-looking soldier, wearing one of those spiked helmets which report says are to be worn by our infantry regiments, presenting himself at the window, civilly demands all the passports. This affair over, the train goes on again through pleasant country to Aix-la-Chapelle, where everybody gets out, and goes to an office to reclaim the passports, which are given back with an official stamp in one corner, gratis, and from that time you may breathe the Prussian air without let or hindrance. My passport had no *visé* for Prussia, and none was needed. A Foreign-office guarantee is of some use, after all.

Our train, being first-class only, was one of *grande vitesse*, literally *great swiftness*, which means twenty miles an hour. And whether this rate be really extraordinary, or whether the rails were badly laid, I know not, but what I do know is, that from Aix to Cologne we were shaken, rocked, jerked, and jolted in a way that I had never before experienced except on a brewer's dray, over the stones. To keep your seat was a feat worthy of an acrobat. I hope the directors, or his Majesty Frederick William, sometimes travel the same route: they will find that *grande vitesse* means *grande détresse.* But all things come to an end, and as the sun was, as Tennyson says, "sloping towards his western bower," we came in

sight of Cologne. Soon we were at the station, and collected in the room where the baggage, which had all been brought in locked vans, was to be examined. Some twenty porters brought it in and laid it on long benches, and every one ran to seize his own. After a little waiting, I got an official to look at my knapsack: "*Est-ce tout ce que vous avez?*" he asked, and to my "*Oui*" he replied, "Such a little packet is not worth the trouble: you may go." I took it up, and shouldering my way through the crowd inside, and dodging through the crowd of cabs outside, a minute or two later was hastening along the broad walk by the side of the Rhine to the *Gasthaus von Holland*, near the bridge of boats that spans the noble river. I was housed by half-past seven, satisfied on the whole with this first stage of my journey.

CHAPTER II.

"The traveller into a foreign country knows more by the eye, than he that stayeth at home can by relation of the traveller."—BACON.

———"You will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sail'd below,
When I was there with him; and go
By summer belts of wheat and vine."

TENNYSON.

COLERIDGE tells us that in his walks about Cologne, he counted not fewer than "two-and-seventy stenches." Perhaps he did. But whether or not, the mere suspicion of such a fact is quite sufficient to make one dread a visit to the scene of so many odours. I was therefore agreeably disappointed at finding anticipation belied by reality, for the old Rhenish city is much better-looking, cleaner, and livelier than I had expected; and during the two hours that I walked about before nightfall, not a single one of the two-and-seventy stenches saluted my nostrils. Though the Germans are proverbially slow, we must not suppose that matters have stood still in Cologne since the days of Coleridge's visit, any more than in our own stirring towns. Of course my first stroll was to the Cathedral, of

which, the inside being scarcely visible in the deepening twilight, I saw only the outside. Unfinished though it be, and disfigured by scaffoldings, it is an imposing edifice—one which invites you to wander patiently about its precincts—but it did not give me greater pleasure than the sight of Westminster Abbey or York Minster, to say nothing of certain churches in Normandy. A long story might be told about when it was begun, when it was half finished, and all the details and accidents of its growth; how much it has cost, and is yet to cost; but as it is all to be found in sundry books of travel and topography, with the usual embellishments, I shall not burden my narrative therewith. And besides, it is only fitting that they who are inquisitive in such matters should have the pleasure of hunting them up for themselves. Those who have the good fortune to see the building, may judge if there be, as Mr. Ruskin says there is, a "look of mountain brotherhood between the cathedral and the Alp." At all events, they will hardly fail to wish success to th Männer-gesang Verein, who it is said are to[illegible]ing agai in London this summer, and whose earnings are given to wards the finishing of their stately *Dom Kirche.*

Having daguerreotyped the building well on my brain, so as to be able to recall it at pleasure, I walked about the town; up one narrow street, down another, threading narrow alleys—now in a doubtful neighbourhood—now emerging into a quiet little square that looked just the place to be inhabited by people who had seen better days. Then there was a great square, surrounded by good shops, and people crossing and recrossing in all directions, and a large detached building near the centre—a full-grown double-headed eagle painted over the entrance—with

groups of soldiers lounging about it, their muskets piled close by. On the walls are pasted proclamations and placards of various kinds, most of them headed with the queer-looking eagle, which looks as though, like the bird of Irish notoriety, it could be in two places at once. Brother Jonathan calls a broiled fowl, a "spread-eagle;" and if the Prussian eagle has not been split open in a similar way, one is puzzled to account for its peculiar anatomy. However, we may suppose it to be a bird full of meaning to the Germans, for they find no fault with it.

Presently you hear the tap of drums, and the rush of feet and clang of arms, as the men run to the piles, catch up their muskets, and fall in. A brief inspection follows, then patrols relieve guard, and with some more drumming the *corps de garde* is settled for the night. There is scarcely anything which more strikes an Englishman in foreign towns, than the number of soldiers: there they are at every approach to the city; there they are at the guard-houses; there they are at the barracks, on the wharfs, at the ends of the bridges, at the doors of the theatres—as though the government lived in mortal fear of somebody: perhaps of those of whom it ought to be the loftiest aspiration—the noblest action. Even in toy-shops, soldiers are a thousand to one more numerous than dolls or whistles: horse, foot, and artillery, there the little leaden effigies stand in troops and battalions for the delectation of children. Perhaps it is this early familiarity, which makes them so patient of things military when they grow up.

The more I see of continental towns, the more do I find that if you have seen one you have seen all. Any one who has been to Paris, who has walked through its dingy

quarters as well as its gaysome places, has not much to learn as to the general aspect of foreign towns—that is, excepting always certain places in Holland and Switzerland. Everywhere the same tall white houses, narrow windows, balconies, striped blinds, and a general air of taking it uncommonly easy, so easy indeed that nuisances and inconveniences which would not be tolerated in England for a single day, are submitted to with stoical indifference. On the other hand, how charmingly picturesque are those uncomfortable streets, with their languid business habits, and their scenes of domestic life, creating an animation that trade fails to give, as though the people had nothing to do but live out of doors and enjoy themselves. Sewing, washing, ironing, and cooking, are carried on before all eyes, and so are certain little matters over which folk in other countries like to draw a veil.

All this can be seen at Cologne as well as elsewhere. In my perambulations, I came at times on an old house in out-of-the-way places, which was a perfect picture, with its deep-set windows, draperied by doubtful garments, hung out to air by the poor occupants; its tourelles, conical-roofed, and surmounted by a rusty weathercock, its quaint gables, and all so dilapidated and weather-stained, as to make you feel that renovation and repair would be a real outrage. What queer shops, too, in the back streets, as though "anyhow" were the presiding genius of their economy, and as though it were perfect matter of indifference whether customers came or not. And what queer things they expose for sale! Does anybody ever buy such useless-looking articles, or is it only make-believe? Here is an old-iron shop, with heaps of

things that look excessively like burglars' implements, and a medley of rubbish that you would believe no human ingenuity could convert into a stock in trade. Close by is a dusky den, showing in its open window things that look like stale pancakes, lumps of suet, a few onions, bits of soap, a dish of sour krout, a shrunken loaf or two, suspicious slices of cheese, and a lot of empty match-boxes, and dirty physic bottles. What thoughts a crowd of such objects suggest to the mind! Museums and picture-galleries are dead in comparison. They are associated with living objects; humanity in one of its many aspects; and to know how people, especially the common people, live, is a question more interesting to me than the trophies of art; one only to be answered by observation, and not always by that.

I made my way back to the river: took a turn on the bridge, a cool and crowded promenade. Lights were gleaming on both sides of the swift-flowing stream, the rushing noise of which mingled solemnly with the hum of many voices, and the faint swell of distant music and snatches of song. I went back to the hotel, full of things to think about; but not having slept the previous night, somniferous influences soon made me forget Cologne and all its phenomena.

Up at four the next morning, in time for the five o'clock steamer, the first being generally the best. On taking my ticket at the office on the quay, I asked for second-class, or fore-cabin: "Monsieur," was the answer, "it is the same price all over the vessel; and the fare to Mainz is three dollars." I thought it strange, but paid the amount and went on board. We were half way to Bonn, when the collector came round to examine the tickets and

tear off the counterfoil. A young man with whom I had been talking, produced a small parallelogram of coloured paper, while mine was white, and was told that, being a second-class passenger, he had no business "abaft the funnel." He immediately walked forward, and I took the opportunity to inquire why it was that the clerk at the office had told me there were none but first-class places: "Mais, Monsieur," replied the collector, "the fore-deck is all very well for common people, but not for such Messieurs as you." That I was not cajoled by his answer he quickly perceived; it was, however, the only one forthcoming, and I consoled myself with the thought that after all three dollars was not dear for a trip to Mainz, notwithstanding that it might have been done for one-and-a-half.

The stream was more rapid than usual, owing to abundance of rain, and the melting of snows in the distant mountains; and instead of the clear and brilliant green that travellers talk about so much, the water was more like that of the Thames after a flood, and thereby lost much of its beauty. But it is a noble river, rolling down a volume of water that impresses the eye and the mind with a sense of power and majesty. Our steamer proved herself worthy of her reputation, for she ploughed her way upwards with remarkable speed, and soon the Siebengebirge came in sight, and showed us where we should get our first view of the far-famed beauties of the Rhine.

Nearer and nearer, through the early morning, the dew yet heavy on the grass, the cattle in the meadows standing in a lake of mist, and distant trees half-concealed by floating vapours,—all indicative of a fine day. At

last we shot between the hills: there were the vine-clad slopes, the gray and purple rocks, the hanging woods, the grassy banks, the cottages with high-peaked gables, and, above all, the grim old castle-ruin, as though to make beauty appear more beautiful in contrast with its frown. But—I was disappointed. Either my expectations had been overwrought, or the Rhine scenery has been overpraised. I incline to think the latter; because although it is true that you see a succession of hills and ruins, one is so much like the other as to give a character of monotony by repetition. The true way I imagine to see the Rhine is to land at some of the villages on its banks, to climb the hills, and look down on the river, and see what lies beyond them; to penetrate the lateral valleys, and from footpaths that wind in and out among the woods, to catch glimpses of scenery far more picturesque than anything that can be seen from the deck of the steamboat. This is what I hope to do some day, and walk from village to village for a hundred miles or more along the shores of the mighty river.

Let it not be supposed, however, that a voyage up the Rhine is deficient in interest. There is a sufficient variety of objects to keep the attention fully alive. The towns, the villages, their gardens, towers, and strangely-clustered buildings. The long sloop-rigged and schooner-rigged barges on the river—their sails looking so white and so graceful against the green background; the fishing vessels, broad enough to hold a shed which serves as cabin, and each with a swinging pole sloped between the head and stern, such as market-gardeners have at their draw-wells; the flying bridges, passing slowly from side to side with passengers and cattle; the high prowed and rather clumsy

row-boats, with shovel-shaped oars, that bring passengers to the steamer or carry them ashore; the mills moored far out in the stream, where their wheels splash round merrily by the force of the current, and their clack sounds cheerful as you are hurried by. At times, too, you see one of those huge rafts formed of pine-trees, borne from the numerous tributaries of the great river, and now all bound together, floating leisurely down to Dordt, the great entrepôt where the mass is broken up. It looks like an island, for a village is built upon it, and you see women and children going about, and chimneys smoking, and you hear the sound of other voices besides those of the men who tug at the rows of huge oars at either end. There is much to be seen on the Rhine, and much that having seen you would wish to remember, for on either side lies classic ground. If, however, you wish to see what is truly foreign, you must look closely for little peculiarities.

Our passengers were few at starting, but the number increased at every stopping-place. It was Sunday, and many came on board for short trips, who, disembarking at some village a few miles off, and after passing the day in recreation, would return by a descending steamer in the evening. A cheerful-looking little man, who carried a pipe not quite so large as himself, accosted me, and proposed that we should take breakfast together. He could speak English, and perhaps it was for the sake of practice that he sought my company. We had a capital breakfast, for you can get almost everything you want in the way of food on those Rhine steamers, and not dear; and after that we walked up and down the deck looking at the scenery, and talking of a hundred things, as travellers are

wont to do. He called my attention to one of the small cabins, in which a party of four were playing at cards, and said: "You would not see that in your country on a Sunday." I replied that although England certainly had sins enough to answer for, I certainly did not remember to have seen card-playing in public on a Sunday. Our conversation then turned to moral questions: my companion spoke of the king, of his drinking habits, of the evil influence of his example and that of other members of the government; and of the people generally, he added: "Although I am a German, I can't help telling you that the spirit of infidelity is greatly on the increase among us. Philosophic rationalism flatters us with the belief that the present life is everything, and the next nothing; and the consequence is a life of pleasure, less systematic, less business-ridden, less sad, than in England, but appealing strongly to the imagination, and deadening to the reason." This is a German's opinion on his own countrymen: it contains, unfortunately, too much of truth.

There was a man on board with his wife and two boys, whom, from the expression of his face and eyes, I had set down as a petty trader. I got into talk with him. My surmise was correct: he was a small merchant, who had lived for twenty years in Constantinople, and was now returning to the dear old fatherland on a visit. The two boys, who were born in Turkey, were delighted with all they saw, and seemed familiar with every place that came in sight, so much and so lovingly had their father and mother talked to them of what they so well remembered. They had crossed the Black Sea, and up the Danube to Vienna, and from thence by railway to the Rhine, which

was their last stage; for ere sunset they would arrive at Frankfort, and the boys, who were wild with joy at the thoughts of seeing their grandfather, would have their hopes gratified. The Rhine seemed to them insignificant after the Danube, and on my asking the father his opinion, he said, "Here we have industry and historical memories—there, nature reigns in wild and savage sublimity; that is the difference between the two rivers, and that is why the Danube appears more striking." We went on to talk about the Turks: he believes them to be in a condition to defend themselves, and to have no idea of flinging up their rights or their nationality. They look on the English as their best friends, and hate the Russians with a cordial hatred; and the epithet *Moskoff-ghiaour* (Muscovite unbeliever) is perpetually on their lips. With it indeed mothers terrify intractable children into silence. I was curious to know whether the same laxity in matters of faith prevailed among the Mussulmans as in Germany and other parts of western Europe; and the answers proved such to be the case. The educated and higher classes give a quiet shrug of the shoulders when Mahometanism is talked about; the Koran may be all very well for those who like to think so—they prefer to think for themselves; but they dare not make a show of this scepticism, for "the masses" are as fanatical as ever, and recognise no other doctrine than that taught by their prophet: so as yet infidelity in Turkey must wear a veil. It surprised me to learn also that the Turks never speak of their ruler as the Sultan; they style him Effendimis, or Padishah—king of kings. Sultan signifies *sir*.

You dine on deck under the awning; and very pleasant it is to feel the breeze, to hear the rush of water, to note

the flashing sunbeams, and see the green steep sides of the hills while partaking of the multifarious repast. My little German friend chose the bottle of wine which we were to drink between us. "I am almost afraid of it," he said, "it is so strong." It tasted like second-rate cider. I have drunk cider in the Forest of Dean that was nectar in comparison; but the little man's eyes sparkled, his cheeks flushed, and he became more talkative than ever, after the second glass. Is there a difference of organization between Englishmen and foreigners? A gallon of such tipple as that would not have quickened my pulse by a single beat.

As the day wore on the decks became more crowded; and there was abundant opportunity to see that foreigners stand less on ceremony than we do. There is less restraint and stiffness in their intercourse, and a geniality in the deportment which would be looked for in vain on board an English steamer. I saw miscellaneous parties talking together, where the idea of compromising one's respectability by "letting yourself down," or any such stereotyped nonsense, never interfered with the general flow of good feeling.

At a quarter to five we reached Mainz; then came hasty farewells with those who for a short space had afforded me companionship. There on one side was the city famous as the birthplace of the inventor of printing, on the other Cassel, a fortified suburb, forming what in military phrase is called a *tête de pont* to the bridge of boats which connects the two. Here the Duchy of Nassau is left behind, and the territory on both sides belongs to the Grand Duke of Hesse Darmstadt, and as his good town of Mainz happens to be one of the strong fortresses of Germany, the Prussians and Austrians take

care of it for him. Troops of both these nations are quartered in the town; I could see them lounging in front of the red brick palace on the edge of the river, in readiness to stifle any such aspirations towards self-government as were made in 1848.

I should have liked a run on shore to look at the statue of Gutemberg, but there was scant time for observation, as our steamer pausing but for so long as to allow myself and some half dozen more to step to the deck of another vessel that lay at the quay, turned her prow towards the opposite side of the river. Most passengers land at Cassel, because of the railway which there offers ready means of conveyance to Frankfort, Wiesbaden, and other places, and there are few who care to pursue the journey farther up the river. I, however, wished to see some of the tamer features of the Rhine; and besides, the trip would cost less by water than by land.

The vessel to which I transferred myself had her steam well up, and in a few minutes, having shot through the gap made for us in the bridge, we had left Mainz behind, and were on our way to Mannheim. Broad flat meadows, and level fields, intersected by rows of willows and poplars, and backed by distant woods, stretched far on either side, with scarcely an elevation to relieve the sameness of the scenery. It was a pastoral landscape, by no means dreary, or deficient in signs of habitation and industry. It was dusk when we passed Worms, and I strained my eyes to catch a glimpse of the old town that called up recollections of him to whom we are so largely indebted for liberty of conscience—Luther. But the waning twilight and a screen of trees prevented.

A few miles farther another frontier is passed, and you

have part of the Duchy of Baden on the right, and of Bavaria on the left; instead of Prussian thalers and groschen, florins and kreutzers are the currency, a change that for a time taxes your arithmetical capabilities, and just as you get used to it, is in turn changed for another.

There were but few passengers on board, and as the night came on chilly, they betook themselves below, leaving me to a solitary musing walk up and down the deck, undisturbed save by the beat of the paddles and the rushing of the stream. At eleven we reached Mannheim, where, after wandering about for a time in the dark, up one street down another, and through the alleys of what appeared to be a public garden, I found out the *Pfälzer Hof*, quite tired enough, notwithstanding a pleasant day, to be ready for bed.

CHAPTER III.

"Look ye! master traveller; unless ye note some things worth the seeing, and come home wiser than ye went, I wouldn't give a stag's horn for all your travels."—*Old Play.*

ALL praise to the Grand Duke of Baden for the capital railway which runs from one end of his territories to the other, and along which I was rapidly borne just after the clock struck five on the morning following my arrival in Mannheim. From this town to Basel the distance is 158 miles, and by the Baden line, which is equal to our best English lines, the traveller is pleasantly conveyed to his destination. There is none of that ever-to-be-dreaded tossing and rocking so afflicting to all who journey on the *Eisenbahn* (iron path) in other parts of Germany. I took my place in a third-class carriage, and wished that some of our English directors who make their passengers ride in open unprotected boxes, or in dark, covered dungeons with only two small square holes for outlook, had been there to see how preferable is the accommodation afforded to penny-a-milers in a country which is not apt to boast of being "the envy and admiration of surrounding nations." Indeed, with some few commendable exceptions, the third-class carriages in England are a disgrace.

Our vehicle was crowded chiefly by small farmers and their wives, with a sprinkling of young clerks and students. Most of them had passed the Sunday in Mannheim,

and were now returning by the first train to their homes. I looked round with some curiosity, for there was a great variety of costume and countenance well worth a little study. All were thorough natives; not a word of French could be heard, nothing but German; and though some chatted with noisy vivacity, the greater number smoked in contented silence, and such big pipes that one might think them better suited for Titans than Teutons. It was interesting to look from face to face and read a character, or trace a history; but a good many got out at the first station, and at Heidelberg, where we soon after arrived, the remainder alighted, and a new set took their place.

I am not going to describe this part of the journey mile by mile, nor to sketch every new face that came before me in the course of the day; but there are a few general facts and features which must be noticed. First of all, the railway, notwithstanding that it runs on a nearly uniform level, is a very cheerful line; the stations are light and pleasing in their architecture, and so surrounded by flowers in pretty gardens, so shaded by roses, while hops climb the telegraph-poles, that every halting-place becomes quite a feast for the eye, and a gladsome feeling is inspired on seeing these evidences of taste which so gracefully relieve the dry mechanism of the railway. You will be at no loss for the name of the station, for you will see it written on a board placed a short distance from the building as you approach, and again as you leave. The country, too, is well cultivated; not an inch of waste land is to be seen; root-crops and vegetables, and broad flat pastures, occupy the greater part of the surface. So well is economy understood, that where the seed fails to

come up in any part of a field, the spot is resown with some other quick-growing plant; hence a patch of lettuces or cabbages may be seen in a bean field, or a clump of scarlet-runners where the wheat has perished. This is a practice which might be followed with advantage by English agriculturists. Here and there are plots of tobacco, the cultivation of which being encouraged by the Baden Agricultural Society, the quantity raised annually in different parts of the territory is prodigious—more than 20,000,000 pounds. The raising and preparation of this enormous crop employs 20,000 persons, mostly small proprietors; and so much attention is bestowed on the plant that the produce of Baden is considered the best of European tobacco: some of it is exported to Havannah.

Near a town the level is broken by long lines of poplars; this is particularly the case at Carlsruhe, where the highways are bordered by these trees for miles, producing a singular effect. What sleepy-looking places these petty royal residences are! and if all that is said of them be true, the morality of their inhabitants is not one whit more wakeful. Where princes and nobles have nothing to do but to amuse themselves, and where the people are afraid to say any thing which may lessen their trade or bring them into disfavour, the consequences may be easily predicated. But presently there is something besides poplars to break the level: the hills of the Black Forest rise on the left, now advancing into the plain, now receding, forming a succession of bold and romantic heights crowned with dark fir-trees, with here and there a valley opening, so wild, and rugged, and gloomy, that you long to be exploring their solitudes, or to find your way into some of those little villages which with their

white church spires look so pretty in the far distance. Freiburg, of which you get a good view while waiting at the station, stands pleasantly on the river Dreysam at the entrance of one of these valleys, which, from its wild scenery, bears an ominous name—Höllenthal, or Hell-dale. The traveller, however, who visits it will find it inhabited by an industrious population who, in common with others in the same region, make clocks and rear singing-birds for all the rest of Europe. While these bound the view and satisfy the eye on the left, there are at times broad prospects on the right, where rises the bold outline of the Vosges mountains, so remote as to appear of that purplish green colour which landscape painters love, and there you see also a small slice of France similarly tinted. Then, when you have passed Rheinweiler, you look down from the high precipitous shelf along which you speed, to the valley of the Rhine, where the "abounding river" rolls on in mighty volume though hundreds of miles from the sea.

You cannot help being struck by a certain appearance of military discipline among those employed on the line. At every crossing you see the sliding-bar which serves as gate drawn across the gap, and the attendant standing before it with his furled flag at his shoulder, like a sentry in the attitude of attention. All the men and boys, too, who are breaking stones or strengthening the rails, cease their labour and stand in a row on the side of the line farthest from the train, with their hammers, spades, or crowbars, also in the position of "shoulder arms." The regulations are strict, but the accidents are few.

At one of the small stations where we stopped a number of people were waiting, all of the peasant class, and

all with that homely honest look which reminds you so much of the simple-hearted villagers you read of in Hauff's or Auerbach's tales; and, remembering that Fichte and Richter sprang from such, you would like to point out the future philosophers from the group of wondering children. Among them stood a tall old woman whom I thought the ugliest I had ever seen, except in Belgium—though, perhaps, the natural harshness of her features was exaggerated by some powerful emotion which evidently possessed her. The cause of the gathering was soon explained, as an additional carriage was added to our train to receive a large party of emigrants who were going to Strasburg, there to embark for the United States. They were young men and married couples in the prime of life, with their children: the strength and hope of the village. Two of the men were the old woman's sons, and as the train moved slowly away, her feelings obtained the mastery, and she burst into a passionate flood of tears, exclaiming, "*Sie werde Ich nie widersehen*"—I shall never see them again! There was a human heart filled with a mother's love and a mother's remembrances under that rough exterior. At Kehl the emigrants left us, chanting a musical and plaintive farewell as they were drawn on the branch line. Every year the number increases. Sometimes whole villages depart, taking with them their old men and women, and their priest or pastor, and the place where they lived is converted by the authorities into a deer forest. There is doubtless less trouble in governing quadrupeds than bipeds, for they never want to read newspapers.

There are not fewer than forty-eight stations on the line, one consequence of which was, that our carriage was

emptied and refilled repeatedly, giving us specimens of the population from all parts of the territory. Now it was a group of peasants, the women and girls wearing the same sort of straw hats as the men, and with the short waist, laced boddice, and short petticoat, peculiar to the German rustics from time immemorial. Now, it was a party of working people in their best clothes going to some neighbouring village to keep a holiday, with their faces as bright as glad expectation could make them, and their baskets well filled with bread, cheese, and cherries, and the necks of wine-bottles peeping invitingly out from amid the store. "*Adyeh, adyeh,*" they said one to another, in bidding adieu at parting; a word which it seemed to me was but an ill substitute for their own friendly *Leb'wohl.* Then, as every station was passed, the conductor would go from carriage to carriage collecting the tickets from those who were to alight at the next, for in *slow* Germany they have a much more time-saving way of gathering the tickets than in *fast* England. He was very strict in his duty, but very civil, and equally respectful to third-class and first-class passengers: a quality which conductors in other countries would do well to imitate. To crown all, the day was delightful; the weather all over the continent had been just as we had it in England up to the end of June, raw and rainy; every thing was backward, and the haymakers were wading in many places up to their knees in water in search of their drowned and drifting hay. But in July a change for the better took place, and wherever I went it was the very perfection of fine weather. The people, however, have no more faith in sunshine than we in this misty island of ours; for there was scarcely one but carried an umbrella.

And such umbrellas! big, baggy things, heavy to carry, and wide enough to shelter some half-dozen at a pinch. An Englishman could not observe the fact without an inward chuckle, since it proves that other people are afraid of rain as well he.

We got to Haltingen at three in the afternoon, after a ride which leaves none but agreeable impressions on my mind. Here three or four omnibuses were waiting to carry forward passengers going to Basel, four miles farther, this portion of the railway, owing to the nature of the ground, not being yet complete. It was down hill all the way, but we went none the faster for that, and jogged on very sedately till we came to the little river Wiese, which separates the Duchy from Switzerland, and where, of course, there stands a custom-house. An officer looked in and asked quietly if we "had anything to declare," and looked at the outside of the trunks on the roof, and finding nothing but negatives inside or out, we were suffered to proceed. Even our passports were not asked for; a show of liberality which is not, I believe, accorded to travellers leaving Switzerland by the same route.

A young Frenchman who sat by my side asked me if I was going to Basel to attend the annual gathering of the Protestant Mission Society. He had come from Strasburg for the purpose, being a member of that body, and he pressed me strongly to stay and witness the proceedings. He showed me some tracts translated from the English, the originals of which have had a wide circulation in this country, and which are much esteemed abroad for their sound views and common-sense principles. Protestantism, he assured me, was spreading, and the

reports from all the stations of the mission were more than usually encouraging, and he was looking forward to an edifying week. There is more work of this sort carried on in many parts of the continent than is commonly believed.

At length we clattered over the wooden bridge that bestrides the Rhine and entered Basel. I went at once to the *Stork* hotel, and was right glad to dine, for, excepting a hasty cup of coffee and a roll at Carlsruhe, I had eaten nothing since the previous evening. This duty fulfilled, the next was to see what Basel contained of noteworthy. If you wish to view a place, the best way is to look down upon it, so I climbed a steep street to the Minster, behind which is a terrace planted with chestnut trees, commanding a fine panoramic view of good part of the town and a section of the country, including the Black Forest hills, with the turbid river rushing sonorously along immediately beneath. From such a "stand-point," as the Germans call it, you can learn a little topography, and decide upon the other objects to be visited. You see that one-half of the bridge only has stone piers, the other half rests on massive wooden trestles, and along each side of the platform are laid heavy blocks of stone to increase the weight of the structure, and enable it the better to resist the violence of the stream. Every house presents a gable to your eye, roofed with circular tiles, even the church towers are gabled, and the number of whitewashed chimneys, and dormer windows, and weathercocks flashing in the sunbeams, and the strange grouping of the houses, make up a scene altogether foreign. Many of the houses have a deep arched doorway and grated windows, which give them a gloomy appearance, and make you think of

the days when the Baselers were as fond of fighting as of fun—perhaps fonder—for they have many a spirit-stirring record of bygone valour, when they were hospitable as well as brave, and could inscribe on their walls,—

Willkommen hier an unserm Herde,
Willkommen hier auf Schweizererde.

Their heroism unfortunately has degenerated into strife; the city quarrels with the canton, and the canton with the city, and now they are divided into two, Basel city and Basel country, and each sends a member to the Diet, and as these two members always vote on opposite sides, their votes count for nothing. So much for petty politics.

The cathedral was undergoing repair; the floor was all taken up, and masons were busy with mallet and chisel, and labourers with wheelbarrows, in the work of renovation. I had to climb over heaps of rubbish to get a view of the tomb of Erasmus, and of the old Council Hall. The cloisters adjoining have a strange, old-world look about them, unchanged since the days when they were paced by the worthies of the sixteenth century, who now lie buried beneath the adjacent sod. The grass, however, not smooth-shaven as befits a cloistral nook, was rank and choked with weeds, and large patches of ground-ivy, that sent up a pleasant odour when trodden on. The memorials of the dead were not tombstones, but a slender iron rod about four feet long, thrust into the ground, with an iron plate at the top, painted to resemble an open book, on the pages of which were recorded the name and age of the deceased. Among them a few were shield-shaped, perhaps to denote a difference of rank.

Most of the shops are small and darksome, and have more the appearance of having been converted out of ordinary living-rooms than of being built for shops, which is perhaps the reason why glass cases filled with the articles kept on sale, are hung out at almost every house. At the doors of the tobacconists, stands the figure of a pedlar with a basket slung from his neck, in which are exposed small packets of tobacco to attract customers; and you see that business is chiefly attended to by women, who sit just within the door or on the step, sewing or knitting. One hardly knows whether the men or the women work the most, for if you stand on the bridge for half an hour, you will see a constant succession of women passing and repassing with heavy burdens on their heads, evidently doing a good share of the work; and another half-hour will reveal to you the fact that elegance is by no means a characteristic of the population.

But I must get on. Let those who want to know more about Basel, its buildings, improvements, its fifty public fountains, some of them famous for their architecture, consult the authorities on such subjects. Early the next morning I took my way through the *Aeschen Vorstadt*, or suburb of Aesch, where from the bridge at the town gate you get a pleasing view of the gardens that now enliven the bed of the moat, blooming and flourishing in spite of the grim, old, many-towered walls that frown down upon them. Before the clock struck seven, I was already some miles on the road to Berne, with knapsack on shoulder and full of the expectations which the beginning of a walk seldom fails to inspire. The road passes close to two battle-fields—St. Jacob and Dornach—which are as honourable to the Swiss as Thermopylæ to the

Spartans; and still testify that there was once a day when they could beat ten times their number of Austrians. Whether they could do so now or not remains to be proved. In the glow aroused by the sight of spots hallowed by patriotism, I felt that they could; but just then entering Reinach, the first village on the route, and seeing it so dirty and squalid, and the children playing about so grimy, and the people loutish looking, the charm was instantly dissipated, and I thought it might do them good to get a beating in turn.

Every step brought me nearer to the hills that were visible in the distance from the walls of Basel, and walking on I met wagons laden with hay, timber-trucks bearing tall pine-trees, large wicker carriages heaped with charcoal, and merrily jingled the bells hung from the horses' necks as they went past. Pear, apple, cherry, and walnut trees bordered the road, which curved gently between the fields, where troops of haymakers were busily working; at length it struck the base of a hill, and in another minute I was in one of the first defiles of the Münster Thal.

CHAPTER IV.

Oh, ye valleys, oh, ye mountains!
Oh, ye groves and crystal fountains!
How I love, at liberty,
By turns to come and visit ye.—COTTON.

THE traveller who enters Switzerland by the Münster Dale, or Val Moutiers, as it is called in French, finds it an avenue of approach far exceeding his liveliest anticipations, and such as by the varied impressions it makes on the mind, prepares for the grandeur of the Alpine views seen from its southern extremity. A short distance beyond Aesch the hills approach so near together as to leave scant room for the road and the river Birs, which run side by side for many miles. The hills are high enough to be called mountains in our lake district, and are mostly covered with trees to the very summit; oak, beech, and birch on the lower slopes, and above stately pines and firs—hanging woods, surmounted by wild and dark forests. Here and there are broad grassy patches, dotted with clumps of trees, quite park-like in appearance, tretching from the foot of cliffs that rise ragged and weather-stained far into the region of mists and storms, and give a frowning beauty to the scenery. The ruins of two old castles perched on what appear to be inaccessible

crags complete the charm and the surprise of the picture, and, pausing with wonder-stricken eye, you look round, and catch a view of the old part of the wall, and two of the flanking towers of the village, while the stream rushing by with a noisy current, plays a sonorous bass to the gentle rustling of innumerable leaves. You think nothing can be finer, when, at the next turn, you see a new combination of rock and wood and hill and hollow, which at once strikes you as far more beautiful; and this diversity gives to the wanderer through the Münster Dale, the impression that he is witnessing some of Nature's grandest scene-shiftings. Now the road passes underneath a cliff that frowns in savage ruggedness above your head, its red, brown, and purple tints, in glorious contrast with the lichens, mosses, ferns, and trailing plants that grow from every crevice and hollow; and at such places there is the additional charm of the river brawling and foaming over the masses of rock which have fallen into its bed. Anon the hills recede, and leave space for a verdant basin, traversed by sparkling rills, sprinkled with trees singly or in umbrageous groups, while among them stand the little rustic wooden farm-houses, which we always associate with a Swiss landscape, and every available inch is taken up by fields of grain or rich pastures; the latter, with the grass of the second crop, already in July several inches high. And here you will remark the system of irrigation: no sooner is the hay carried, than the water of the adjacent rills is led across the ground with much ingenuity in numerous channels, running hither and thither along the levels and across the slopes, and, under their refreshing influence, the herbage speedily springs anew: Industry helping Nature to mul-

tiply her bounties. At times a man comes panting along a side path with a load of hay on his shoulders, or a man and woman bearing the burden between them on a hand-barrow, compelled to endure the toilsome labour, because the plots are too small to afford roads for wheeled carriages. At times, too, your nostrils are offended by noisome odours from a passing vehicle that resembles a long flat-hooped tub mounted on wheels, drawn slowly by a mule or horses. It is the liquid manure machine, the Swiss being rigorous economists of the fertilising substances which we waste, apparently that the trade in guano may be encouraged. Not so the peasants of the cantons: wherever you go these odoriferous vehicles are met with, some specimens of excellent workmanship, others rudely manufactured of a few rough boards. Often in the evening, when approaching a cottage, you detect the taint in the air, and on coming up, will see the goodman of the house taking a quiet pipe, and at the same time nourishing his salad-bed and cabbages from the contents of a long ladle, which he dips now and then into a tub with much dexterity.

I stopped to breakfast at Grellingen. In this village, as in the others I had passed through, new houses were being built—large and substantial edifices—such as betoken a state of prosperity. They are half dwelling, and half barn and cowlair, with an entrance wide and high enough to admit a loaded wagon: the work of unloading thus goes on under shelter—no unimportant consideration in unsettled weather, or with the thermometer at 110°. Roadside taverns are much more frequent in Switzerland than is commonly supposed; they are generally homely in character, with a passage running from front

to back, separating the apartments occupied by the family from the public rooms on the other. In the largest of these are a couple of long and narrow tables of oak or pine, with forms, or a number of wooden chairs; the walls and ceiling are of pine, in large panels; and in one corner, as big as a Lancashire chest of drawers, is the earthenware stove, its chimney twisting in numerous snake-like curves before it reaches the wall, so as to economize heat; and a large rack, fixed to the ceiling immediately above it, for dried provisions. Sometimes there is a small rude sideboard, or a linen-press, from which the hostess will reach a clean table-napkin for your use, even when she gives you no table-cloth. This is one of the practices in which the continentals excel us: how rare is it that you are supplied with a table-napkin at any place of refreshment in England, whether in the country, or at the west-end of London; and yet at the poorest village tavern abroad you are sure of one; and what traveller does not know the comfort it adds, even to a humble repast? Sometimes a few rude pictures adorn the walls; in the Catholic cantons mostly effigies of the saints, or representations of monkish miracles, and with these the sketch of the ordinary tavern-room over great part of the continent is complete. Some are coarser and rougher than others, but the fittings are the same in all. He who has rambled over England knows that even in ordinary roadside public-houses there is more of a home-look about the arrangements; the chair seats are not always of wood, and there is a completeness and snugness in the rooms which a few long tables and forms can never impart.

If the reader has lost his time while reading these observations, I did not lose mine while making them, for I

was eating my breakfast of coffee, bread, butter, and cheese. Though the day was hot, the butter was hard, owing to the coldness of the cellar or dairy in which it had been kept; and, except in the large towns, I found it the same everywhere I stopped in Switzerland. And is not cold, hard butter, a treat in warm weather? Your chopine of wine or beer, too, comes up with a thick dew on the little decanter in which it is drawn, making its refreshing coolness visible to the eye. The bread is generally rather poor and sour; but with the coffee is brought from a pint to a quart of boiling milk—not cockney milk, but a rich creamy fluid, and with this you may make *café au lait* to suit your palate. The waitress came in and out frequently, and at last, standing on the opposite side of the table, she began a talk in her German *patois* about England, asking many questions concerning the island and folk that own Queen Victoria for their sovereign, and praising it as the best country in the world. If I would but take her to England as my servant, how happy she would be; and nothing should hinder her from starting there and then; or she would even be willing to marry me, if she could not obtain her wish on any other terms. I—

——smiling, put the question by,

and advised her, if she had such a desire to visit the land of liberty, to make her own way thither, and woo fortune instead of me. She then told me of an Englishman who had stopped at the house a few days previously, and had much difficulty in making himself understood, as he could speak no language but his own. Poor fellow! seeing beautiful scenery is indeed something, but one does not

enjoy it any the less for being able to talk to the people who live among it. For my part, I would not care to visit any country where I was not prepared to have speech with the inhabitants. My compatriot had had to make signs for everything: when he wanted to go to bed he lay down on a form and closed his eyes; and for kirschwasser, the Swiss whiskey, he pointed to a tumbler of water and the flame of a candle, as much as to say, fiery water; and his pantomime and his mistakes had been so ludicrous, that the girl laughed right merrily while recounting them. But it is time my breakfast should come to an end: I ate without stint, and was charged only sixty centimes. An abundant meal for sixpence! Was it possible, I thought, that Switzerland could be so dear a country to travel in as had been represented?

On again, with gladsome spirit and willing foot, for—

> The trees were holding festival,
>   And pleasant murmurs ran
> From leaf to leaf thro' all the woods,
>   As though in praise of Pan.

In such scenery one feels tempted to describe every mile of the way, if only for the sake of impressing it well on the memory; but as I may not linger, a few more touches must suffice. Sometimes you come to a grassy basin, from which there appears to be no outlet, and there is more or less of surprise in finding the place of egress. A little farther, and the cliffs broken and distorted overhang the road, threatening a fall, with copious springs leaping from the crevices in a full, steady stream, or dripping from the sharp edge of a flat shelf in a ceaseless, watery fringe; and on the rocks beneath, nourished by the abundant moisture, grow thick soft beds of moss intermingled with

ferns and creepers, luxuriant and lovely almost beyond belief; so that the enraptured eye finds beauty to dwell on in the near as well as the distant objects. In another place the rocky strata are upheaved at such sharp angles, and thrown about in such wild confusion, piled one on the other to such towering heights, that the mind is no less lost in imagining the tremendous forces by which such effects were produced, than in contemplating the savage grandeur of the scene itself. Were it not that trees grow in the nooks and hollows, and that tufts of verdure peep from some of the fissures, you might fancy the convulsion only suspended for a moment to break out anew in still wilder sublimity. Here, yawning on the road, are huge caverns; in some the remains of fires show them to have been the halting-place of gipsies or strolling players; in one a large wooden cross was dimly visible at the farther extremity, and the drip, drip, and sounding plash of drops of water echoed in the lofty arch. Save this, and the chirp of grasshoppers, the silence is deep under the noonday sun: not a bird twitters, a rook perhaps caws on a remote crag, or the voice of a haymaker is heard in a far-off field, and anon all is quiet again. In one of the defiles was a little flour-mill, built on a small peninsula jutting into the stream that formed a rapid over smooth broad ledges of rock; and to look down upon it from the road as it stood sheltered by a high bank, covered with shrubs and flowers, and see "the dark round of its dripping wheel," half concealed by a screen of rose-bushes, was a picture rarely to be met with, and never seen by those who hasten past in a close carriage, or in the *rotonde* of a diligence.

No fear of losing your way, for if the well kept road

be not a sufficient indication, the telegraph which runs the whole way from Basel to Berne will serve you as guide. The wire, a single one resting on short brackets, is stretched on tall fir-poles planted along the route, passing from one side of the road to the other, to save distance at the bends. Sometimes at a deep zigzag it takes a bold leap across from point to point; now it runs high above the steep bank, the brackets fixed to the stems of the fir trees, or to the projections of a rugged cliff; and just when you think there is no more of it, it reappears, and the poles seen far in advance help you to measure the route, and mark your progress.

The distance from Basel to Bienne is fifty-four miles, and thirty or forty miles of this are of the character here described. It is our own Dove Dale, longer, grander, and bolder. It more than made up for my disappointment on the Rhine, and had I seen nothing else I would have thought myself sufficiently well repaid for the journey from England by the sight of the Münster Thal. Besides grand scenery, there are results of industry interesting to witness: here and there you come to a saw-mill built on the very edge of the stream, and fitted with machinery of the simplest form. The current drives a small wheel, which in turn works a crank attached to the lower end of the saw, while the upper end is connected to the extremity of a long elastic pole—in the same way as a pole-lathe is worked,—and so the saw is pulled up and down. The stroke is not great; but as rapidity of execution appears to be of no moment among the Swiss, a good deal of timber is sawed by dint of mere plodding Near Courrendelin are busy iron-works, and the bang and clang of the huge hammers resounds with mighty

reverberations through the rocky defile. There are watch factories, too, in which numbers of men and women, boys and girls, are employed. I was permitted to go over one of these at Malloray, and saw all the details of the manufacture, from battering the strips of brass with deafening thumps, to the making of steel screws, so minute that in a mass you can scarcely distinguish one from the other without the aid of an eye-glass. When I saw the ingenious apparatus for economizing time and labour, and the rapidity with which all the parts could be produced, I no longer wondered that Swiss watches should be found in such numbers in all parts of the world. This single factory turns out a hundred dozen of works every week, which are sent to another part of the country to be put into cases and finished. Most of the working people were the small proprietors in the immediate neighbourhood, and about one-half were away at the haymaking; but how they manage to make the delicate machinery of a watch with the same hands that have wielded the scythe and pitchfork is more than I can understand. They work from five in the morning to half-past seven at night, with an interval of one hour and a half for breakfast and dinner, and their earnings are from four to twenty francs per week. Very few, however, at the latter amount; for people who derive some part of their living from the soil, can afford to give handicraft for small wages.

Watchmaking has naturalised itself in Switzerland as cotton spinning in England, and furnishes employment to some 30,000 individuals around Geneva, in the Jura villages, and among the hills of Neuchatel. The trade originated in that canton about 250 years ago, and there

are still its head-quarters. One of the inhabitants returned from his travels with a watch, which having been accidentally injured, he took to an ingenious maker of wooden clocks for repair. It was the first time the village artificer had seen a time-piece with a spring, but he succeeded in the task, greatly to the astonishment of his neighbours. This success led to the making of spring clocks, watches were next attempted, and in time numbers of industrious hill-folk had mastered an art which enabled them to employ profitably their long, severe winters. They soon got to make their own tools and invent new ones, and as the manufacture increased traders began to go among them to collect the watches they made, for sale in distant places. In this way the trade has flourished, and now schools are established for instruction in watch-making, more machines are used, more hands are employed, and nearly 3,000,000 of watches are exported every year.

For the sight of this factory I was indebted to the kindness of a Dr. Herzog, whom I fell in with on the way. He was going to visit a patient, and we chatted together of things in general, and the Swiss in particular. His countrymen, he said, were inclined to look on the English as their friends, and perhaps their helpers should any despotic government attempt to suppress their liberties. "Suppose Austria should try that game?" I asked.

"Wouldn't we fight!" he answered.

"But you would surely get beaten."

"Yes, perhaps we should, unassisted, though not without a long and tough struggle."

"And then?" I asked again.

"Then," he replied, "rather than submit to the Aus-

trians, we should emigrate to America by hundreds of thousands,—I feel quite sure of that."

Whether it was the excitement of conversation or my sympathy with his feelings that excited his benevolence, I know not; but when he reached the by-road where he had to turn off, he stopped and wrote a note to his friend the superintendent of the factory at Malloray, with which I obtained admission.

I was by no means impatient to leave the Münster Thal, and made it a journey of rather more than two days. Near Court I climbed to the top of the hills for the sake of the view; and in going through the pine-forest saw trees so tall and so ample in girth that it was easy to believe them the growth of a thousand years. Not even in America had I ever seen any to equal them. The ascent was toilsome on the steep and tortuous path that wound in and out among the roots, but the view was worth the trouble. Above the pines the surface is broken by patches of loose rock alternating with little oases of pasture and clumps of birch, and broad belts of fir that crown the summit. While wandering about in search of a spring near the top, I came upon a chalet in an out-of-the-way nook where I asked for a drink, but the people and their abode were so dirty as to take away the relish of the water which they readily gave. Their single room was full of smoke, which having no other vent, crept out at the door and filled the shed that covered half of the little yard, where, surrounded by squalid litter, the man was mending a clumsy wheelbarrow. Their *patois* was as uncouth as their appearance: not easy to be understood by the inexperienced, so I fear that my advice concerning order and cleanliness lost much of its effect. They were,

however, very civil, and not deficient in industry, as proved by the good cultivation of their little field; but in other respects, though living high on a breezy hill, their condition seemed as miserable as that of many in the wretched alleys of London. Is it that isolation is as fatal to decency as overcrowding?

I lay down for a time on a grassy slope that commanded a view for miles along the valley, musing dreamily on the question, whether mountains do really affect national character or not? while my eye wandered from hill to hill noting their various forms. The abstract question was too much for me; but I remembered that, according to geologists, square cliffs and narrow riven dells are formed by the lower limestone, jagged peaks and towering precipices by the primary rocks, rounded swelling downs and dry pastures, such as in the south of England, by the chalk, while to the tertiaries we owe our meadows and plains.

The effects of industry are abundantly visible also in agriculture: little patches of earth by the roadside, formed by recession of the rocks, are not waste, but are planted with potatoes or sown with flax, and all the grass that borders the highway is carefully mown and carried away, instead of being trampled under foot by every wayfarer, as in other countries. You often see a man or woman mowing on a bank so steep as scarcely to afford foothold for a goat; but difficulty seems to be as nothing in comparison with the providing of a good store of fodder for winter. One of these peasants told me that the land was parcelled out in lots varying from half an acre to fifty acres, the larger quantity being very rarely exceeded. Each possessor cultivates, according to his means and

inclination, grapes, flax, hemp, wheat, barley, maize, or grass: if the latter, owing to the system of irrigation, there are always two crops in a year. While the grass is growing, cattle are not allowed to graze; but where access is permitted or possible, they are sent to the mountain pastures.

At Tavannes, my second night's halting-place, I met with an English artist travelling in search of the picturesque with his wife and two daughters, and while sitting over our tea late in the evening, we had a little friendly talk about what we had seen and where we were going. After a day or two's rambling by oneself, conversation seems to settle one's ideas—to pack them away, as it were, in the brain, and leave the mind free for fresh impressions; and especially so when the parties are intelligent and amiable, as were those I had fallen in with. I was up before them the next morning, and the dew was still on the grass, as I passed under the "Pierre pertuis," or great arched rock which bestrides the road a short distance from Tavannes. The telegraph wire makes a bold spring, at a sharp angle, to leap over it. Going down to Sonceboz was like descending into a vast white lake, so thick lay the mists in the valley, heightening the effect of sunlight on the hill tops. Here you exchange the rushing Birs for the roaring Süze, and the road mounts to such a height on the hills that the roar is at times scarcely audible. Here, too, the Jura range assumes a grander form, as though to exert a spell over the wanderer before making their final plunge into the plain. I had climbed the last ascent, when, through a break in the hills, I caught sight of what seemed a great white cloud resting on the distant horizon, glistening in the sunbeams. I

stopped to look, and observing the distinctness of its outline and unvarying form, I felt at last that it was part of the great snow-clad Bernese mountain-chain. For a time I stood transfixed, unable to turn my eyes aside from the glorious object of my pilgrimage; then hurrying forward, I came out at last beyond the screen of trees at the top of the last slope, and there, full in view from one extremity of the range to the other, the Alps rose before me! Involuntarily I raised my hands in wondering yet solemn admiration, and sat down, regardless of the scorching sun, to gaze. Truly—

High mountains are a feeling!

every sense becomes absorbed in the contemplation, and we experience—

A something that informs us 'tis an hour
Whence we may date henceforward and for ever.

There they were in unclouded majesty,—the Schreckhorn, the Eigher, the Finster Aarhorn, the Jungfrau—yet who would care about names in such a presence? It was enough to sit gazing, and say—

Ye mountains,
So varied and so terrible in beauty;
There, in your rugged majesty of rocks
And toppling trees that twine their roots with stone
In perpendicular places, where the foot
Of man would tremble, could he reach them,—yes,
Ye look eternal!

I was waiting for the diligence at Bienne when the party I had met at Tavannes the evening before arrived, and kindly offered me a seat in the carriage which they had hired to take them on to Berne. The *Hotel du Jura* does not appear to care much for appearances, for we

were sent away with a couple of plough-horses with rope harness, such as would certainly have provoked derision in England, but which was, perhaps, considered respectable at Bienne. Off we went, toiling up and trotting down the steeps at five miles an hour, catching views of the lakes of Bienne and Neufchatel, the Jura range for many miles, and always far before us the snowy Alps. The former of the two lakes greatly excited our curiosity by its remarkable colour; it was green as a meadow—a bright, sparkling green. One of Nature's effects; but, as the artist said, "Who would approve a green lake in a picture?" The emerald tint is probably due to the same cause that produces similar phenomena in other parts of the Jura; namely, the presence of minute globular infusoria, which, small though they be, are full of green granulations still smaller. Naturalists tell us these tiny creatures, so lively in their movements, flitting to and fro in ceaseless activity, in every drop of water near the surface, are nothing but living organisms in one of their stages of development from some other organism. The learned name for them is *Synaphia Dujardinii.* They must have been present in countless millions to make the lake so green as we saw it on that afternoon, when we speculated much as to the cause, during our pleasant ride, which we made still pleasanter by "affluence of discursive talk" till we came to Aarberg, the first really Swiss-looking town we had yet seen, and all the way to Berne.

CHAPTER V.

Make your own observation now, only transfer your thoughts to the city.—Ben Jonson.

The mountains that infold
In their wide sweep the coloured landscape round,
Seem groups of giant kings, in purple and gold
That guard the enchanted ground.—Bryant.

Whether it was that our steeds had used up all their horse-power, or that our driver was afraid of clattering over the stones, we entered Berne at the slowest of all slow funereal paces, which gave the curious ample time to look at us, and to us full opportunity to look at them and their city. The favourable impression that the latter makes on you from a distance is not lost on closer acquaintance: the streets are wide and clean, the houses well built, open places for recreation easy of access, while there are enough of old gateways, gables, towers, and other relics of the past, to contrast agreeably with the improvements of the present. But after a day in the free, open country, how one feels imprisoned on entering a town! It is so close and confined that you fancy yourself sensible of the weight of the atmosphere, especially if your hotel be ill-ventilated, and in a narrow street, and breathing is a labour instead of an enjoyment. With me the feeling at times amounts to positive disgust; and

I like better to end my day's ramble in a village inn or roadside tavern than in the hotel of a town.

There was still enough of twilight to enable us to make out the features of the view from the Münster-platz, to which we strolled after taking tea. This terrace is laid out on the top of a cliff that rises perpendicularly from the river for about 120 feet; rows of lime-trees adorn it, and afford a grateful shade to those who sit underneath on the numerous benches. Far in the distance the snowy peaks of the Oberland gleamed cold and gray in the fading light, forming an impressive background, and the dim landscape immediately beneath them growing dimmer and dimmer, until it merged into the deep gloom that shrouded the bold heights of the opposite shore of the river in imposing obscurity. The scene was one of those combined effects of time and place which the traveller occasionally meets with and retains the impression of for long afterwards. Below the river poured over the long high dam built to check its impetuosity, and its roar contrasted strangely with the other sounds that met the ear.

The Münster-platz is evidently a favourite resort of the citizens of Berne: a statue of the old hero, the founder of their city, stands in the centre, and around it they stroll, or sit, and talk, and laugh, and enjoy the coffee, ices, fruits, and other good things supplied from the two kiosks at the corners. How busy and cheerful was the hum of voices during that evening!—how frequent the bursts of merriment, interrupted now and then by noisy altercations from a German-student-looking party that filled one of the tables! You cannot see such a sight in England. We, here, stand too much in awe of Mrs.

Grundy, are too much afraid of what other people will think of us, to be able to enjoy ourselves heartily, and as we ought, in the open air. Why should not we feel at our ease as well as foreigners?

Yet to me with the eternal mountains before my eyes disappearing slowly under the veil of night, and the deep voice of the river sounding in my ears, there seemed something intrusive if not desecrating in gossip and gaiety, and the clatter of spoons, and cups, and glasses in such a spot. Silence would have been more in accordance with my feelings; but were I a resident of Berne I should, doubtless, become in time as disenchanted as the others.

I was up betimes the next morning and crossed the river to the heights which are so lofty as to command a good view of the city and the environs. The place itself is almost peninsulated by the Aar, and stands boldly up in the prospect, a mass of rock, wall, and roof, broken up by towers and trees, resembling on a small scale the hill on which stands the old town of Edinburgh. It is so surrounded by well-planted and shady walks leading gradually up the slopes and hills, and so away to the open country, with the swift stream beneath, as to form a most pleasing picture. The exertion of climbing to look at it from different points of view is well rewarded, especially as you get peeps at the distant hills through breaks in the landscape. While you are gazing, a long, narrow timber-raft shoots past, and you cannot help wondering at the dexterity of the two or three men who steer the unwieldy mass so safely round the sharp and sudden bends on their way to the Rhine. Others follow at long intervals; but you see no boats, the current being far too rapid to make rowing against it a pleasurable

exercise. Many of the houses have their lower galleries almost touching the river, as though floods were not to be dreaded; and above these are other galleries up to four or six storeys, each apparently occupied by a different family, for whom the gallery is backyard and exercise-ground. I could see poor women toiling painfully there in the midst of their families, washing and cooking in narrow quarters, fighting a battle against privation, while the sun shone down upon the wooden structures with such a fierce heat that they must have been at the temperature of ovens. A back street in London seemed to me to be preferable to such a residence.

The main streets of Berne remind you of Chester by their arcaded footways, which are, however, of solid stone, not of wood. They give the houses a heavy prison-like appearance, rather displeasing, but when you feel how they shelter you from the scorching sun of a Swiss July, you are quite ready to forgive the architect. At the rear of these are the shops, which have all of them more or less of a primitive character, and afford in their arrangements and the articles exposed a few hours' interesting study. For name-plates you will see a card framed and glazed on the doorpost. Fancy-shops are numerous, betokening, with the abundance of *Views in Switzerland*, a brisk demand for *souvenirs* on the part of visitors. Especially characteristic are the wood-carvings, and you cannot fail of being struck by the number of bears exhibited on the stalls. They are of all sizes, from that of a sucking-pig to a dormouse, cut out of beech, and well done too, to tempt the passers-by. You see them at stationers', at basket-makers', at confectioners', and even on the clerk's desk at the hotels, so that if you like to bring

away a specimen of the animal from which the city derives its name, you can gratify your wishes. And if you will, you may go out to the Aarberger Thor and look at the living bears which are kept there at the expense of the citizens to perpetuate an ancient custom and heroic memories.

Half the population appeared to be living under the arcades: traders had brought out small quantities of their wares on a board, and sold them without the trouble of going into the shops; there mothers were nursing babies, and grandmothers knitted, and maidens and matrons plied the needle, or picked wool or hair. It was perhaps the annual period for wool-picking, for at every ten or twenty yards you came on a group pulling a mattress to pieces, and loosening its contents. In some of the widest streets, busy hands, armed with sticks and poles, were giving the mattresses a preliminary beating, or performing the same salutary operation on carpets. Then at every fountain, and they are not few, you see children passing to and fro from all sides to fill decanters or jugs, and women and girls are washing pots and pans, or picking and cleaning a salad; and when they swing the latter round and round in the open wire basket to shake the water out, you had better keep at a distance if you wish to avoid a sprinkling. There is something in all this that pleases you, it has a good-natured appearance, and, for the time being, ball-cocks and slate cisterns, and the daily forty gallons of New River that you left at home, lose somewhat of their importance in your mind. You will perhaps think that if the people in England were not ashamed to do their household work in public, they would be more at their ease when taking pleasure in

public; and you may find yourself forming plans and wishes inspired by the scene before you, when all at once, English clouds and showers, English habits, the dogged spirit of work, and the "move on" of certain civil functionaries, will recur to your memory, and you will be satisfied to leave the matter in the hands of Time—the greatest of all innovators, and the slowest.

You hear very little French spoken; indeed, throughout the canton of Berne, German is the prevalent language. The names over the doors are mostly German, proclamations and other public documents are printed in German, with, in some instances, a French translation by the side. And though you will have perceived something French in the character of the people in Switzerland, you will also find on further observation, especially in the Protestant cantons, that the Teutonic is dominant, and its manifestations such as to engage respect. If you have not much sympathy for the Helvetic Confession of Faith, you will find something to esteem in its results, when you see frivolity subordinated to its proper place in popular life and conduct. The Bible Society, following the example set in another land, distribute Testaments for the use of travellers to the various hotels. There was one on the table in my bed-room with *La Société Biblique de Berne* stamped on its cover.

As Berne is the residence of foreign ministers accredited to the Swiss government, it is there you get the *visa* for other countries. As my plan was to return home across France, I had to pay five francs for the Frenchman's autograph, which, considering that he had never seen me before, might be regarded as guaranteeing me on pretty reasonable terms. Considering, on the other

hand, that he knew nothing about me, that I might have been a conspirator in disguise for aught he could tell, it strikes me that Louis Napoleon's representative sells his signature somewhat rashly. The landlord of the hotel declared it to be impossible for me to enter Piedmont without the Sardinian minister's *visa*, and would not believe my assurance that our Foreign Office had published the contrary, until he went to the *bureau* to inquire, when he found that I was right. This understanding between the two governments, not only saves trouble to the traveller, but four francs to boot, the sum formerly charged by the Sardinian functionary. What a comment it is on revolutions, that with all their overturnings, the people of the Continent have not yet succeeded in abolishing the nuisance of passports!

Thun, seventeen miles distant, was to be my next halting-place. The road-side views being such as could be well seen from the roof of a carriage, I saved my legs for better work, and rode. There is a sort of solemnity about travelling by diligence in most places where diligences run, that contrasts strangely with what we were used to in stage-coaching days. You go to book your place—to *inscribe yourself*, in foreign phrase, and when you pay the fare, the clerk hands you a yellow ticket as large as a Bank of England note, on which is stated that you are entitled to such and such a seat in the *rotonde*, *coupé*, or *banquette*, as the case may be, and you must take such seat, whether it be comfortable or not, and no other. On the back of the ticket you will find printed in small type as many *avis* as would take you half an hour to read, and much longer to remember, and involving you for the time within the meshes of that vast system of centralization which on the

continent delights in doing everything for everybody. Then, at the hour appointed, the clerk comes forth from his office, and reads over the names of the passengers *seriatim*, beginning with the *coupé* and *rotonde*, and ending with the *banquette*; and when your name is called, you are expected to answer, and mount to your place. The whole is rather amusing than otherwise, when you are not inconvenienced nor in a hurry.

We rattled out of Berne at a sober pace at four in the afternoon. How hot, and bright, and blue it was! And to think that in England July was a dull rainy month! Still, whatever the weather, I prefer a seat on the *banquette* to an inside place. The conductor delivered letters and newspapers at the villages as we went along in an unsophisticated manner. They were not locked up in bags, but he selected those which were needed from a loose heap lying by his side on the seat, and handed them down to the receiver—most frequently a woman—in his cap, and brought up the postage in the same receptacle. Occasionally he took a newspaper from its envelope and read for awhile, or he scrutinized the addresses of the letters with great curiosity, and made comments thereon to some of the passengers. I asked him if he thought it a sufficiently careful way of carrying on the postal service, to which he replied it was only the afternoon correspondence; the morning post was always safely shut in bags. The only reason he could give for any distinction being made was, that the afternoon despatch was "such a little one."

About two leagues an hour is the "regular" speed of a Swiss diligence, with twenty minutes to change horses The people certainly do take life very easy, and appear to be in nowise anxious to fill up time with too much work.

Why should they hurry? The grapes would not ripen a jot the sooner if they travelled four leagues the hour. At one place our horses and driver were put on their mettle, for a wagon-load of rustics got before us, and keeping just ahead by dint of flogging, they half blinded and smothered us with the dust that rose in dense clouds from under their wheels, shouting and laughing at the annoyance as a good joke, and before we could succeed in passing them, we were as white as millers. We, for our parts, did not see the fun of it, and were glad to leave them behind; which may readily be believed, seeing that this particular bit of road has the reputation of being the dustiest in Europe.

Between Berne and Thun are said to lie some of the best soil, and the best cultivated fields in Switzerland, which you can easily credit on seeing the well-to-do look of the people, their flourishing farms, and comfortable dwellings. The houses, indeed, have an air about them betokening something like attachment and long residence on the part of their occupants. A few have been in the same family for two hundred years, and each successor as he came into possession has found pleasure in making some alteration or addition—often lovingly with his own hands—to what is really his home. The result is in many cases highly picturesque, without being inconvenient. Then, under the galleries, you will see stores of well-scrubbed milk-pails and dairy utensils, and rows of beehives filling the racks from near the ground up to the sheltering eaves, and inside there appears no lack of household gear, while on the outside teeming flower beds, and thickly-planted ranks of tall hollyhocks, complete the picture. Such abundant vegetation is a feast for the eye, and you find it difficult

to believe that on the slopes of the mountains which seem so near, wheat is grown in gardens as a curiosity, tied to small sticks, and tended with as much care as an amateur devotes to his camelias or fuchsias.

From the top of every rise in the road we could see the Oberland. "What do you think of the mountains, who live always near them?" I asked of a merchant of Thun seated at my side. He paused for a few moments, and replied by another question,—"What do you think of the chimneys in London? We see the mountains every day; they make no impression on us, except when they come out stronger than usual in the rose colour of sunset. Then we say, how beautiful! that's all." At one of the places where I stopped to breakfast in the Münster Thal, I had said a few words to the hostess on the extreme beauty of the scenery opposite her windows:—"Ah, monsieur!" was her answer, "but when you see it every day! And then in the winter, that which makes it so beautiful to you now, makes it the more terrible to us." There is something in both remarks which might be taken into consideration by those who think a daily sight of the Jungfrau entenders the heart and ennobles the intellect.

A quaint, antiquated little town is Thun, one that you like to prowl about for bits of architecture and glimpses of character. I am not going to describe it, though I would undertake to write a chapter about it that everybody would be glad to read, whether they have been there or not. The picturesque old feudal castle has a history of its own, as all ancient places have, more or less edifying. Those who wish to get an idea of it—the building, not the history—may do so by talking a walk to

look at the Freemasons' Girls' School near Wandsworth, the tower of which is the Thuner Schloss in miniature. The *Freyenhof* is a comfortable hotel, and not dear, and having quartered myself there, I went out to look at the lake before sunset. The waiter by mistake sent me down instead of up the river; and after walking some time, I asked a man to point to the lake. He pretended not to understand, and hurried away; a second, equally boorish, did the same; at last I met a soldier and asked him, thinking he, at all events, would know something of better manners: he, however, shook his head, and kept on his way; but placing myself before him, I said,—"You don't go on till you have answered my question," and that there might be no mistake, I repeated the words in French as well as German. He murmured something, and at length said,—"*Sono Italiano.*" He was an Italian, which explained his difficulty, but not that of the other two, who spoke German. However, having a few words of Italian at command, I speedily obtained the desired information, and we parted with a mutual salutation.

The Aar had the faint milky tinge which it always has in settled weather, and which it loses whenever a change takes place to rain or storm; then the water becomes beautifully clear. I walked slowly along watching the glorious rose-coloured tints on the huge mass of the Blumlis Alp, that shut in the view beyond the lake, when a party seated on a small wooden bridge caught my eye. Something engaged their attention so intently that they did not perceive my approach, and on coming up I found they were the artist and his family busily sketching, seizing the wondrous colours ere they faded for ever. The

recognition was a pleasure on both sides; and as the evanescent hues had soon vanished, leaving only a cool and cooling gray, we sauntered farther on, and through the pleasant grounds of a mansion situate just where the stream issues from the lake. We afterwards crossed the river in a boat, and so varied our walk back to Thun, with no lack of subjects to talk about. At the hotel we again separated, hoping to meet in the morning. I went to my room and looked out for a time on the Aar rushing swiftly as a mill-race beneath, as if each individual particle of water were impatient to reach the sea, and chafed at the delay, although its movement seemed rapid as the flight of the swallow. Running water has a sort of fascination for me; I love to hear it, and could gaze on it for hours; but thoughts of the morrow came over me, and seeking my pillow, I was lulled to sleep by the hissing rush of the river.

CHAPTER VI.

In a compagnie
Of sondry folke, by adventure yfalle
In felawship.—CHAUCER.

Go where the waters fall
Sheer from the mountain's height.—KEBLE.

Now for our mountain sport, up to yond hill.
Your legs are young.—SHAKSPEARE.

ANOTHER fine day: delightful for a trip up the lake. It vexed me to depart without saying a word to my good-natured friends; but they were not to be seen, and I walked down to the *Niesen* steamer with an unspoken farewell, and watched the fast-arriving throng of passengers. They were of many nations, on travel bent, for pleasure, profit, or study; some itinerant concert-giving musicians; others pedlars, with baskets of wares on their shoulders; others carried portfolios and camp-stools; and others, of studious aspect and travel-worn appearance, were a scientific foraging party, gathering facts for philosophical treatises, or for the astonishment of ladies at the British Association meetings. One of them showed—

That he in botany was skilled,
He bore a lacquered satchel filled
With store of floral specimens
From mountain tops and mossy glens.

And there were not a few natives: among them peasant women, who made a showy appearance with their ornamented boddices, and glittering chains passing under the arms, from the front to the back of the shoulder; and who chatted in their honest German dialect with lusty voices. Of such were the women who fought with scythes by the side of their husbands, when the French Directory seized the Bernese territory in '98, in the despairing but ineffectual struggle to beat back the invader. The names of some who fell may be seen on the black slabs in the cathedral at Berne. We started at half-past eight, and in the first mile or two passed numerous high-prowed, flat-bottomed boats, laden with men, women, and children, and heaps of field and garden-stuff, which they were going to sell at Thun, where market-day was making its hebdomadal break in the long-inherited dullness. I often wonder whether the dullness found in some foreign towns has come to be regarded as a vested interest, as certain nuisances have in London, not to be removed by sanitary or other commissioners without a heavy bribe. Suppose some well-pursed visitor were to try the experiment.

The vessel sped rapidly over the waters of the Thuner See, her change of place giving us every minute a new aspect of the scenery. The Niesen and the Stockhorn, whose dark summits I had seen from above Bienne, here dip their feet into the lake and rear their massive forms aloft; advanced sentinels of the greater hills beyond, of which you get occasional striking though shifting views as the vessel speeds onwards. What a buzz of conversation was going on all the time, and in five or six different tongues, among the passengers! What bowing and sa-

luting, and lifting of hats, with graceful sweeps of the arms and bendings of the body! One lady took off her bonnet and diligently removed the dust which had settled upon it with a small brush that she carried in her pocket. She seemed perfectly at ease during the operation and if any disapproved of her carefulness, no one showed it. I doubt if the same unconcern would have been manifested on board the steamer at Windermere or Loch Katrine, we islanders being very rigorous in matters of that sort.

From Thun to the head of the lake is about ten miles. You land at Neuhaus, a place made up of a wooden wharf, a wooden hotel, and piles of firewood, and nothing else, except the mob of touters, guides, porters, drivers, carriages, and miscellaneous people, that wait your disembarkation. The scene reminded me of Chertsey on a sham-fight day at the camp, so great was the clamour and confusion. There was a party of three Englishmen, who showed their want of self-reliance by hiring a guide there and then to take them to Chamonix; which was something like hiring a guide at Oxford to show you the way to Ben Nevis. Vehicle after vehicle drove rapidly off to the Lake of Brienz, about four miles farther, where another steamer was waiting, making the dusty road ten times dustier; and under this and the scorching heat of the day walking became a truly heroic exercise. I kept slowly on to Unterseen, a village midway between the two lakes. It was the original of the panoramic view I had seen in my boyish days, and had remained so vividly impressed on my mind as to make me resolve to see it when an opportunity offered. It fully confirmed all my youthful recollections: the mountains by which the ro-

mantic village is shut in are quite as steep and high as the picture showed them; and the houses, embrowned with the sun and storm of two or three centuries, are of that peculiar architecture which we have come to consider as essential to a Swiss landscape.

To visit Lauterbrunnen had not entered into my plan; but being so near, about three hours' walk, I determined to devote the day to it, and leaving my knapsack at a tavern, I soon found myself among such scenery as made me think little of heat, dust, or any other inconvenience. It was the Münster Thal over again, but with mountains about the height of Snowdon at each side of it, and the Lutschine that rushes torrent-like through it, foaming, tumbling, dashing, and roaring in proportion. Phlegmatic, indeed, must he be who could behold such magnificent combinations of rock, wood, and water, without being kindled into enthusiasm. He who views them rightly carries away impressions that in all after-life may serve to charm, soothe, and sustain the mind, and which the heart will cherish among its most precious memorials.

Another pleasure in this valley, as in the Münster Thal, is the sight and scent of odoriferous herbs and flowers that grow in profusion at the roadside, so profusely that in places the rocky bank might be compared to a garden run wild. Then, at times, a sharp turn brings you to the side on which the sun has not yet shone, and there the grass and flowers and beds of wild mint are thick with dew, so refreshing to eye and nostril, that it is like having the early morning over again. Many a time did I bury my face in the dew-besprinkled mint, and always with keen enjoyment of the delicious coolness.

Once or twice, when the big brown flies plunged their stings too deep into my skin, or the sun brightened his reflectors, I could not help wishing to change myself into a river for about ten minutes: a tumble over the masses of granite would have been delightful! Or as a Dutch poet says,—

Were we of feather or of fin,
How blest to dash the river in,
Thread the rock-stream as it advances!

But the ancient Greeks monopolized all such pleasant processes, and left none for us who came after them.

On an eminence at the outskirts of Unterseen is a pleasure tavern, called the Jungfraublick, or prospect; and in walking up the valley you get a constant succession of Jungfraublicks; and it is with an indescribable feeling that you find yourself so nearly under the shadow of the great mountain which you had first seen from afar. You are brought closer, too, to the homely Swiss life and character; log cabins are not unfrequent, a rude simplicity is apparent, and on the fronts of the houses are cut or written those pithy or devout sayings with which people in the olden time loved to show that Providence was in their thoughts. Some of them are curious: their general tenor may be understood from the following:—

Who trusts in God with Heart and Hand,
Hath built his House upon no Sand.

Lauterbrunnen signifies *nothing but springs:* and a fitting name it is, for all round it you see springs bursting from the cliffs, dropping in showers from the crevices, and everywhere the plashing murmur of rushing water

greets your ear. And far up, safe from hand of man or foot of goat, grow flowers and ferns—

That from the rocky wall's steep side
Lean without fear, and drink the spray;
The torrent's foaming pride
But keeps them green and gay.

At about an hour from Unterseen, you pass on the left the road leading to the Grindelwald, a place of glaciers, forests, and mountains so massed together, as to produce wondrous effects of the savagely sublime. But it lay out of my way for the present. On arriving at the inn (the *Capricorn*), I called for a bottle of beer, and carrying it out to the garden found a shady spot under the hedge, where I sat down to rest and refresh, and contemplate the scene, of which the chief attraction was the bright, sharp summit of the Jungfrau—*that* I shall never forget. It was in strange contrast with the green slopes of the hill facing me, though that in places was streaked with snow; yet there were summer verdure, and human habitations perched on turfy ledges, or nestling in the hollows. Such a scene invited contemplation: I lingered more than an hour, and for the time, to me seated there, deep down at the foot of such stupendous hills, man and his works seemed very insignificant.

Afterwards I went to look at the Staubbach, but with some misgivings, having always been disappointed in waterfalls. In this case, however, there was no disappointment: a brook tumbles over the top of a precipice a thousand feet high, and before it reaches the bottom is broken up into a mass of mist that curves and waves in the wind, and falls in a perpetual shower: hence its name, Dustfall. Byron likened it to the tail of the pale horse

ridden by Death; it might also be called the haunt of Iris, for she stretches her rainbow bridge across it during the morning hours. Strange are its contrasts! a wind rushes horizontally from it like a blast from the grave, striking a deadly chill into him who ventures too near. The savage grandeur of the dale is beyond description. I went a league farther to the Sefinen Thal, and saw two other falls, similar in character but not so good as the Staubbach. As you pass the scattered cottages of the village, the occupants rush out and open the doors of a wooden case standing against the front walls, and expose to view collections of wood carvings, miniature chalets, and other knick-knacks, in the production of which they employ the hours of their long dreary winters, hoping to sell them in the summer. Many of the specimens exhibit considerable taste and ingenuity.

For any one with time to spare, Lauterbrunnen would be good head-quarters, there is so much to be seen in the immediate neighbourhood. Opposite the village begins the road leading up the Wengern Alp, near the top of which, a height of more than 5,000 feet, is a small hotel, where tourists go to see the avalanches fall on the side of the Jungfrau. The same road leads over the Alp to Grindelwald, and is the one to be taken by all who love mountain prospects. Then, at the head of the Lauterbrunnen valley, three or four hours distant, is the fall of the Schmadribach: a river tumbling in three roaring leaps from the mountain's breast to the bottom of the ravine. There are also paths leading over the hills to the valley of the Kander, traversing scenes of wild and desolate grandeur; but these are hardly to be attempted without a guide.

Having to forego all this, for the present, I walked back to Unterseen, resumed my knapsack, and followed the road leading along the left shore of the Thuner See. The sun had dropped low behind the hills, and the lake lay so smooth and placid, that their huge shadows were reflected with unruffled outline; and the quiet and coolness of evening were a relief after the heat and excitement of the day. I was tired, and coming to a *gasthaus* about three miles on the way, prepared to rest; but the folk had had a cleaning up, the floors were wet, and tables and chairs standing about in dusty disorder, looking altogether so uninviting, that I was fain to go farther, notwithstanding my fatigue and the entreaties of the hostess for my stay. Another three miles and I came to Leisigen, just before the sober gray of twilight had deepened too much for me to see how prettily the village stood on the brink of the lake, the high-peaked roofs, and the little church spire peering up above the thick, umbrageous trees, and blue wreaths of smoke floating lazily upwards. The inn was one of those old-fashioned wooden edifices with far projecting eaves, broad galleries, and heavy porch, now rarely to be seen, but which have a charm of their own. The honest old *Wirth* was sitting at the door, chatting with a group of labourers; and answered my demand for supper and bed with a hearty "*Ja, wohl*" The whole group followed me into the sitting-room probably for the sake of hearing whether the stranger had aught to talk about; but I was too tired for conversation, and, as it presently appeared, to eat, although excellent coffee and inviting adjuncts were soon set before me. I asked for my chamber, and the ancient host, lighting a candle, conducted me, to my surprise, into the street, and

to a large white house that stood some distance off on the opposite side of the way. He unlocked the door; we entered a passage that looked vast and gloomy in the dim light; and as we passed along it and ascended the stairs, our steps resounded through the building with hollow echoes. He led me to a two-bedded room on the first-floor, which, with its clean white hangings and neat furniture, had a very comfortable appearance. I expressed a hope of having the apartment to myself, and was answered by an assurance that I should be "*alleinig genug*"—lonely enough; and so it proved, for I was to be the sole occupant of the house.

"I shall be obliged to lock the outer door," said the old man; "but it shall be unlocked in good time in the morning;" and with this he wished me "*Gute Nacht.*"

For a minute I had misgivings that all was not right. There were two doors to the room; one I locked, the other I barricaded with a sloping chair, as a measure of precaution; and in less than five minutes was in the deep, dreamless sleep of a weary wayfarer. I might have spared my misgivings, for nothing disturbed me till the tinkling of a streamlet that fell into the lake under my window woke me soon after sunrise. My boots were standing cleaned upon the landing, the front door was unlocked, I went across and paid the worthy host for the comfortable lodging with money and thanks, and then betook myself to my journey before the morning sun had peeped over the hill tops.

Kandersteg, some twenty-five miles distant, at the foot of the Gemmi, was to be my next halting-place. The main road skirts the lake shore to Spietz, and there turns into the valley at the foot of the Niesen; but leaving this,

I took a mountain path on the left, which cuts off some three or four miles of the distance. Though rough and steep, it leads to scenes and prospects which are quite lost to the lower route. In and out, up and down you go, now screened by a hedge of hornbeam, now a maze of brambles, where wild roses, foxgloves, harebells, and magnificent thistles grow on the low bank, watered by a tiny rill that steals along, half-concealed by the grass and overhanging weeds. Now you are overshadowed by cherry-trees, laden with their small black fruit, or branching walnut-trees, that stretch their leafy arms far across the narrow path, and form a bowery avenue. Then there are breaks where the sun beats full upon you, and the stones in the path reflect the heated glare; but from these places you get the distant views, more and more extensive as you ascend. Still higher—till at last your eye takes in the whole lake of Thun, its margin of hills, and the little town itself nestling in the blue hollow far away. And what wondrous effects of light you get as the inconstant breeze strays over the water, caressing its gleaming surface! I could not help fancying the lake spread itself gladly to drink in light, that it might have the more pleasure in reflecting the forms of the hills that surround it. It is not the least charm of a byeway that it shows you the materials of the landscape in such combinations as almost to make you doubt of their being those seen from the highway.

It was Sunday morning: bells pealed musically in the calm summer air, and here and there were groups of men, women, and children, wending their way to church. From time to time I had heard singing in the distance before me, and at last came up with two girls, trimly dressed in peasant garb, who sang as they walked, apparently

because their hearts were overfull of cheerfulness. They were going to a village some three hours distant, to see their parents; and as our paths lay in the same direction, we kept together, and had some not unprofitable discourse on the manners and customs of the district, on pastimes, and the pleasures of singing. On the latter subject they spoke with the earnestness of those who really love to exercise their voices, and were not unwilling to continue their song, if I would walk a few paces behind them instead of at their side. First, they sang a verse or two of a thanksgiving hymn; then, turning the leaves of a book which one carried in her hand, they finished with—

Üb' immer Treu und Redlichkeit,
Bis an dein kühles Grab,
Und weiche keinen Fingerbreit
Von Gottes wegen ab!

and their voices sounded pleasantly under the rustling leaves of the trees.

We parted at Aeschi, where, stopping at a little hostelry, I asked for breakfast. "*Nur ein Pinte*," answered the proprietor, who lay sunning himself on a bench at the door, with a jerk of his thumb towards the sign that swung overhead. I looked, and saw what is frequently to be seen at the road-side in Switzerland, the words *Pinte Wirthschaft*, painted below the hieroglyph on the board, which signify the house to be one where beer or wine alone are sold, and where no guests are lodged, or meals provided. Turning my back therefore on "Only a Pinte," I went farther up the straggling street, and found all I wanted under another sign. Still my appetite failed: even the two new-laid eggs or "*zwo Eier*," as the hostess called them in her rustic dialect, seemed repulsive, and

but for a pot of black cherry jam, which tempted me by its cool acidity when spread on the bread, I should have eaten nothing.

The church service was short, for before I had finished a number of country people came in to drink before starting for their homes. Some of the women wore green baize gowns, others dark purple stuff, with snow-white cotton sleeves, and broad-bordered black lace caps. For a time there was a noise as of a confusion of tongues, until the stream of gossip having slackened, some of the men asked me to satisfy their curiosity as to who I was and where I was going. They were forthwith answered, upon which they rejoined that it was a pity England was so fond of war; a remark which rather surprised me. I speedily set them right on this point, and to do so the more effectually added, that most Englishmen held the Manchester doctrine—better trade with a man than shoot him. It would have done Mr. Cobden's heart good to hear the honest burst of approval that followed. "*Ja, ja;* that's good truth," exclaimed one after another. And not less hearty was their satisfaction when, in reply to their earnest inquiry on the subject, I told them it was probable that, in case of need, England would help Turkey. I little thought to hear war talked about in such an out-of-the-way village, which though situate at the very top of the hill, and looked down upon by the mighty pyramid of the Niesen, is as rural and sequestered as heart could wish.

After resting an hour or two, I descended to the main road at Mühlinen, while the heat became more intense and oppressive than ever. There was some sense of coolness in hearing the dash of the Kander, up the valley of which my route now lay; and still more so when at noon the

sky became overcast, and a brisk fresh breeze swept up between the hills. I turned round to face it, and seemed to inhale new life with every breath, and, as if by magic, all my languor vanished. It was truly a blessed breeze! Presently it began to rain heavily, which laid the dust and cooled the road; and what more could pedestrian desire? With renovated feelings I went forward to Frutigen, where I circumvented my inability to eat by swallowing four raw eggs one after the other in a draught of wine. The girl who brought them to me lifted up her hands, and cried, "What a murder!" She would doubtless have thought it no murder to put the same eggs into boiling water.

The nearer you approach its head the wilder does the valley become, and with every step you are getting deeper, so to speak, into the bowels of the great chain of the Oberland. The rain came on a tremendous pour, and drove me for shelter under the trees of the gloomy pine forest that borders the road, where such was the life inspired by the change of temperature, that I sang all the lively hymns I could think of, at the top of my voice, during my hour's detention. By eight o'clock I was safely housed in the *Weisses Pferd* at Kandersteg, doubting whether such a chilly, dark, showery evening would bring in fine weather for passing the Gemmi on the morrow.

I had just finished tea, and was looking out on the little green plain which contains the inn, the chapel, and a few scattered houses, when two Piedmontese arrived in a char from Thun, with whom, after finding that we were all bound the same route, I agreed to go over the pass, and we separated for the night, with a promise to meet in the *salle à manger* at five in the morning. The mornng

came, but dull and lowering: however, after a survey, we resolved to set out and breakfast at Schwaribach, a lonely tavern, midway on the pass. About a mile beyond the inn the char road strikes the foot of the mountain, and there we began at once to mount by a zig-zag track through the pine forest which covers all the lower slope. From time to time we got some striking views of the grim valley behind us, where the mists that poured down from the hill-tops seemed to be boiling as over a raging furnace. How strange the dark fir woods looked here and there half emerging from the gray vapour, while gusts of sound came at intervals from the dimly-seen cataract of the Kander. At a fork in the path, a finger-post inscribed *Nach Wallis* pointed our way, and soon after we passed the wicket-gate made of fir-sticks, which marks the boundary between the cantons of Berne and Vallais. The track was steep; but in about an hour we had mounted the last zig-zag, and reached the edge of the pastures on the top. Here we took a last look down into the Kander valley; it was still sombre and vaporous; but the rain had kept off, the clouds were beginning to break, and after all, the mist and gloom produced effects in the view not to be seen in clear weather.

Although I knew that flowers grew thickly on the mountain pastures, I was surprised and delighted at the profusion, chiefly of the Alpine anemone, peeping everywhere from the short green turf, and glistening with rain-drops, for the sun now shone out, and all was bright again. For some distance the path is tolerably level, winding in and out among the masses of rock that have rolled down from the mighty cliffs of the Rinderhorn, which, with the Altels and other heights, seem mountains even at this

elevation, shut in the pass. Then you come to two or three chalets in a green hollow, where sheep and cattle are grazing, and intersected by rills of water that sparkle as they run. Except in a fog, there is no danger of losing the way, for the course is nearly direct: you have only to remember the quarter you came from, and the poles set up on risings in the ground will keep you right. Soon after passing the chalets, the pasture gradually disappears, hidden by lumps of stone which you may easily fancy have been rained down upon it for ages, so thickly and confusedly do they lie; and hard work it is to walk among them. A new track is, however, being made not far from the old one, which avoids many inequalities of the ground, and will when trodden enable the traveller to traverse this part of the pass with greater ease and security.

We were glad when a rise in the stony path showed us the tavern of Schwaribach, a solitary house on the top of a cliff, looking down on a small lake at its foot. Here for a franc a piece we had as much as we would of *café au lait*, bread, butter, eggs, and cheese; and having rested an hour, on we went again. The wild and savage features of the scene grew sterner as we advanced, until we came to the rocky desert in which sulks the desolate-looking Dauben See; not blue and sparkling as a mountain lake should be, but muddy and lifeless. On its border lay broad patches of unmelted snow, which we had to cross, close at the water's edge. High on either hand rose jagged cliffs and distorted crags; the track was almost imperceptible, and there seemed to be no practicable outlet. But the path bends to the right beyond the lake, and then resuming its former direction ascends the rocks, which appeared

impassable in the distance. It is a toilsome climb: a few minutes' courage, however, brings you to the top, and there is a reward for all your labour. From a height of more than 7,000 feet above the sea, you look down upon Leukerbad, on the Dala Valley, and have glorious views of the great Alpine chain which slopes on the farther side towards Piedmont and Italy. We stood a few minutes to gaze, but the strong wind which swept through the narrow hollow that forms the summit of the pass, made us glad to descend a few yards on the other side for shelter. This wind is well-known in the valley as the "Gemmi wind," for it not unfrequently strips the roofs off the houses in the month of March; a fact which explains why so many of the houses have big stones lying on their shingles. We looked into the stone-built cabin erected as a refuge for exhausted travellers; but it was half filled with drifted snow, hard frozen, cold, damp, and miserable.

How beautiful appeared all the verdure of the vale, in contrast to the desolation behind us. We ran forward to a sunshiny patch of turf, betufted with wild thyme, and throwing ourselves down on the grass, we rolled and frolicked in exuberance of delight. My two companions had been used to the hills all their life, and were capital mountaineers, active and surefooted. We crawled to the edge of the cliff, and peeped over. It was scarcely possible to believe the village of Leukerbad, with its hotels and houses, to be anything but a collection of birdcages; and you could not help thinking that, after all, human beings, with their ways and works, were no such great things, if distance could so diminish them. There was a cascade, too, which shot from the top of a still higher cliff,

and with a little more water would have made a magnificent Staubbach.

On the side towards Berne, the valley of the Dala is cut off from the world by these perpendicular cliffs, nearly 2,000 feet high, except by a shelf which zigzags from top to bottom of the precipice. In a direct line, the descent is about 1,600 feet, but the ins and outs compel you to multiply it by three, if not more. To see it is to comprehend fully how daring must have been the ideas of those who first planned and made it; for if you cannot go up or down without a sense of danger, what must have been their hazard who explored the way? There is no real risk: only refrain from experiments in running, lest you should be unable to stop yourself, and topple over at the angles. Half way down we met a German, who sat panting on a stone: he inquired eagerly how much farther it was to the top, and to the tavern at Schwaribach, and groaned in weariness of spirit on hearing he had yet some distance to mount. He went on to talk about the peculiarities of travellers, and made himself merry over what he called the fussiness and freaks of the English, who, he said, could never travel, except on horseback, and with veils on their faces. I did not tell him I was an Englishman; but as we continued our descent, the two Piedmontese agreed with me that a man who wore primrose kid gloves, as the critical German did, while sweltering under a knapsack on the side of a mountain, might at least have expressed himself more modestly, if not more truly.

Looking back from the foot of the descent, where a finger-post in Vallaisian orthography denotes the *Chemain du Ghemmi*, you cannot see the slightest trace of the zig-

zag. The cliffs, with their tremendous frown, present a threatening barrier, and but for actual experience, you might well believe them impassable. Including the breakfast halt, we were six hours in crossing.

The first impression of Leukerbad is not favourable: dirt, disorder, and squalor, reign supreme, while some of the ugliest effigies I ever saw, are reared aloft on tall crosses. We had got through a tortuous defile between houses, which is perhaps called a street, when a waiter from the *Hotel des Alpes* waylaid us; but we were not to be made victims of in that manner, and chose quarters for ourselves at the *Hotel de France*, which is neither dear nor uncomfortable, and where the principal waitress serves at dinner, dressed in full Vallaisian costume, the chief peculiarity of which is the hat trimmed with costly lace and ribbon, reminding you by its form of that worn by the "beefeaters" at the Tower. We had plenty of time to walk out to the much-talked-of ladders, by which the inhabitants of a village at the top of a cliff, mount to or descend from their habitations; and to see all the wonders of the valley, including the baths. From these the place takes its name, and every summer numbers of invalids and hypochondriacs come from long distances to bathe in the waters. As the immersion has to be from two to five hours, they bathe all together in a large cistern, dressed in long dark gowns, and there they sit up to their necks in water, talking, playing at chess, or sipping coffee. Strangers may walk round in the railed gallery and look on; and from the sight, I concluded that to me such an indiscriminate process would be so disgusting, as to more than neutralize any beneficial effects which the water might produce.

CHAPTER VII.

If worlds are tops that round and round
Do twirl with dust and din,
Theirs surely wanted winding up,
Or else it would not spin.—ANON.

DILIGENCE, the contrary to idleness.—JOHNSON.
———— a slow vehicle.—WALKER.

THE approaches to the mountains, the glens, gorges, and defiles which occur in the valleys, more than repay any fatigue endured in climbing the passes. It is as though Nature had formed them to prepare the wanderer's mind for the towering grandeurs which he is presently to behold, or to charm away the regrets he might feel when these are passed, and he descends to a lower level. We had enjoyed the expectations and fruitions of the ascent, and when early the next morning we pursued our way down the gorge of the Dala, and saw the stream struggling along the bottom of a rocky ravine some hundreds of feet below the road, it gave a completeness to our enjoyment, not unlike that produced by the burst of harmony which finishes a noble strain of music. The road descends rapidly, making long curves and *dètours* round difficult places, to facilitate the passage of vehicles. It is only within the past two or three years that it has become possible for travellers who did not use their own legs, to

get to Leukerbad by any other means than the backs of mules, so steep and tortuous was the old route. This is still used by those who go afoot, and we availed ourselves of it to cut off the long zigzags of the new route. About four miles down, we were stopped by a man in uniform, who demanded fourteen centimes from each of us; a toll which strangers are made to pay, while natives of the valley go free. Soon after we came to the bridge that bestrides the Dala, with an arch 160 feet in height; and here we had to separate. My two companions pressed me greatly to accompany them to their Piedmontese home; but that being impossible for the time, they wrote their names and address in my note-book, and gave me a running invitation to visit them whenever opportunity offers; and when it does, they may depend on seeing me. We shook hands and parted with friendly farewells, they crossing the bridge, to follow the road to Leuk, I striking off to the right for Sierre or Siders, some ten miles distant. My route led by what is called the *Gallery*, a shelf-like path, about three feet wide, hewn on the face of the cliff, and through some of the projecting crags in short tunnels. A fine view is obtained from its lower extremity: the valley of the Rhone lies before you, the snowy peaks of the Simplon apparently closing it far to the east; the St. Bernard and the Diablerets to the west; and lesser hills stretching from one to the other. You look down upon the little town of Leuk, the great Simplon road, the mouth of the Dala dale, and, turning your head, there appears a sprinkling of towns and villages, the nearest gleaming brightly in the sunbeams, the farthest seeming but a faint shimmer in the dark hollow between the hills. A strip of muddy water runs along the centre of the valley, with a

furlong or two of a bare stony bed on each side of it; and that is the "arrowy Rhone," the ugliest feature in the landscape. It is a broad zone of desert, lying between the green and fertile hill-slopes.

When I turned into the path leading to the Gallery, a man quickened his pace to keep up with me, and offered, as he had to go to Sierre, to carry my knapsack for half a franc. "One may as well earn a few sous as not," he added, as I shifted the burden from my shoulders to his, and gave him the opportunity of verifying his words. For some miles the path continues to run high up on the breast of the hill, between fields of wheat, rye, and maize, and a constant succession of vineyards and walnut-trees, the latter most abundantly laden with fruit. The sight of the drooping branches appeared to gladden my companion, for with an animated tone he said, "There will be plenty of oil this year, for the poor people to eat with their bread." He was, perhaps, looking forward to the long, weary months of winter; and he knew by experience, that when walnuts are few, the oil fails; no unimportant consideration to those who have rarely the means to eat animal food. He had never heard of pickled walnuts; they were too valuable to be so treated, because such as were not used for oil, were, when fully ripe, stored away, to be eaten instead of cheese. There are few Englishmen who would be content with such a substitute for old Cheshire or double Gloucester. Amid the abundant vegetation it was a surprise to come upon a broad, bare patch of large and loose stones, furrowed by shallow streams of turbid water, and where all trace of the path was lost. But far up on our right a glacier clung to the mountain side, the cause of all the mischief by the fierce freshets it sends down in

the hot months. Thus the glaciers devastate by water where they cannot harm by frost. In some places the path was flooded ankle-deep by the water that ran swiftly through the numerous channels of the vineyards, and we had to take flying leaps from one hump of the track to another, to save ourselves from a drowned footpath. Irrigation is only necessary on light land, and is adopted with reluctance, as the more the vines are watered, the weaker is the wine. Hence it is, that heavy soils, which need no watering, generally produce the best wine. As yet the grape malady has scarcely appeared in this district; owing, it is believed, to the practice of transplanting the vines occasionally, and giving no manure.

By ten o'clock I was seated at breakfast in the *Soleil* at Sierre, a modest, though clean and comfortable inn. There was a sofa in the *salle*, and chairs with something softer than wood for seats, namely rushes, their backs ornamented with three goats'-horns polished, and fixed so as to represent a Prince of Wales' plume. In one corner stood a Doric stove of white earthenware, nearly as large as a sugar hogshead. How these stoves tell of severe winters! The windows were draped with tasteful muslin curtains, hung to a cornice that projected canopy-wise into the room, to leave space for the hinged windows to open. A large volume of rare old engravings of views in Rome lay on a side-table; and among the prints and placards on the wall hung Bauerkeller's relief map of Switzerland, a most interesting subject for study, especially to a pedestrian. Purposing to climb the St. Bernard on the morrow, I resolved to travel to Martigny, nine hours distant, by the diligence which passed through in the evening, so as to be fresh and ready for the task. To

occupy the interval, I took a survey of the little town and its environs, which may be compared to a poor stone in a rich setting. The streets are narrow and irregular; the houses, except in the main thoroughfare, mean and miserable; the population to match, and all stricken by an oppressive dulness. Talk of St. Giles's or Clerkenwell! here was squalor which, by its very sluggishness, seemed even more repulsive than in those well-known quarters of London. Vines growing in all the garden-plots flung their long green and leafy shoots far across the road, and over the dilapidated tenements, as though Nature strove to conceal the deformities of man's creation; but in vain,—the shabbiness could not be hid. No one appeared to have anything to do, unless it were to cultivate a gift for idleness. At times an ox would creep in from the fields, drawing a wagon piled with hay or rye, that brushed the houses on each side as it passed; and when it stopped, the women who pushed behind would climb to the top of the load, and pitch it lazily into the loft of one of the wretched habitations. There were a few shops, but the only trade I saw throughout the day was the purchase of a loaf, and five centimes' worth of thread. Even the women who assembled at the fountain had nothing to talk about, for they were very mute, and scrubbed their pots and kettles on the edge of the basin in almost unbroken silence. One, who had two lettuces to wash, made the operation last three-quarters of an hour, and could say nothing to two or three ancient dames, who tottered up from a by-street to look on, but that the weather was "*sehr warm.*"

There was one shop that particularly struck my attention: it had no window, and received light only from the

doorway. The door was of thick plank, fitting flush to the wall, heavy enough for a prison-gate; but though wide, one-half of the entrance was barred by a block of masonry which served the double purpose of seat and show-slab. A bell, with a short rope, hung to the inside of the door, and as this opened outwardly, the bell was always in the street. The counter was a rough pine table, nearly covered with specimens of the stock-in-trade, which consisted of haberdashery, hardware, stationery, drapery, brooms, brushes, and a variety of other articles, closely packed away on the shelves round the walls. I went in to have a chat with the owner, and, leaving the bright sunshine, could not at first distinguish him in his dark corner, where he seemed to be resigning himself to what the fates might send him. He was half-asleep, and would not wake up to return my salute, so I left him to his meditations,—that is, if he had any,—and almost inclined to believe that the chink of coin would scarcely have roused him from his lethargy. Later in the day he came forward and stood in his doorway, looking up the street and down the street at—nothing, and shifting the burden of his own weight from one leg to the other when he found it too heavy. Here he lounged for two or three hours, sometimes hooking his hand up to the bolt of his door, and propping his foot on one of the clamps in a most uncomfortable position; but it was a change, and perhaps gave him the idea that he was doing something. Then he lit a cigar, and sat for two hours on the stone slab, and by a continuous process of relieving himself of the unpleasant taste in his mouth, he formed a puddle in front of his doorstep, just on the spot where customers would tread on entering. Possibly he knew that customers

were what the fates most seldom sent him. When the cigar was burnt out, he took off his hat and examined it minutely inside and out; and this task he continued, with but little interruption, until the evening. I made a second attempt to get into conversation with him, but with no better success than the first. What a specimen of that which Wordsworth calls "the dreary waste of common life!"

I remarked to the landlord of the hotel, that I found the extreme dulness of the town quite amusing. "You should be here on Sunday," he answered; "you would not then be able to get through the streets, so crowded are they with people who come from miles around. It is then market-day, and hundreds come to buy and sell, and to go to mass, and some have a complaint or a dispute to bring before the justice. And then we get news from the mountains, and those who live up in the mountain get news from the town. If it were not for the Sunday, we could not live." Had it not been for waiting five days, I should have liked to witness such a busy spectacle and its effect upon the apathetic shopkeeper.

I strolled to a little eminence on the outskirts of the town which commanded a view of the pleasantly-wooded valley and distant snow-peaks, among which was the Rawin; then to the churchyard, where there was neither green grass nor soft turf,—nothing but bare grave-mounds with wooden crosses stuck into them, and at one end the most magnificent bed of thistles my eyes ever beheld. Inside, the church was a curious medley of statues, pictures, candles, and gilding, a decorated organ, and an altar with variegated marble columns rising to a great height, surmounted by a large crown and angels with

outspread wings, all in strange contrast with the worn and antiquated appearance of the pews that covered the floor. There was much in the scene that suggested the question—Could such things be, were the population not lamentably benighted? On going out again, I saw an open door giving entrance apparently to the vaults, and went down the steps to see what was within. It was a small crypt chapel, but fitted up to produce a most startling effect. At one end stood an altar inclosed within a plain pine-wood railing, to the front of which, on a level with the eye, was fixed an image of Christ on the cross, but every feature and limb so distorted by apparent agony, and so thickly covered with mimic drops of blood as to make me shudder with horror on looking at it. Close by was a painting of the head crowned with thorns, if possible more repulsive; and the two were flanked by pictures of the Virgin and wreaths of faded flowers. Instinctively I turned round to seek for something less hideous; but there were horrors behind me as well as before. Immediately opposite the altar, and half-way along each side, was a pile of skulls, intermingled with arm and leg-bones, kept in place by a light railing. The skulls were ranged with their grinning jaws and empty eyesockets turned outwards, forming a ghastly spectacle; and some of them, as if in mockery, were crowned with gaudy yellow wreaths of *immortelles*. Not a sound disturbed the silence: and there seemed a sort of horrid fascination in the sight, which kept me standing for a time gazing on it, until a chill crept over me, and made me glad to leave the gloomy vault for the bright sunshine and warm air outside. What a place for worship! That it is used for this purpose, was clear from the seats which

occupied nearly the whole of the floor. But it is easier to affect the imagination than to impress the heart.

There is a smaller church in a back street, in another part of the town, the aspect of which betokens great poverty, or a want of cheerful aspiration on the part of those to whom it belongs. It is no figure of speech to describe the paved floor as little less uneven than the stony patch I had passed in the morning. Overhead a beam, painted blue with red stripes, stretched from side to side: twenty or thirty small coloured prints adorned the altar, and its two columns, covered with once gaudy flowered paper, sadly out of keeping with the dingy walls, which even the few larger prints hung upon them failed to animate. The lamp was out, the piscina dry and dirty, and the whole place as lifeless as the faded fir-tree standing in each corner.

On returning to the hotel, I found a dusty-footed traveller at breakfast, who, after a little talk, told me he was a tradesman of Berne, and that for the first time in his life he had been paying a visit to the mountains of his native country. "I can now understand," he went on, "why it is that the English are apt to complain when things are not to their liking in our hotels; for after knocking about in the hills, one gets an extraordinary longing for good fare and comfortable quarters. I shall never find fault with them again." He had thoroughly enjoyed his trip, and ate his breakfast and talked with equal enjoyment. "I don't know what we should do without England," he said, pursuing his remarks; "you come over here and spend many millions of francs every year: you send us most of the best things we get for convenience and comfort in our houses. Look here,

this coffeepot comes from England, and so do these knives: you never see such from any other country. I use none but English knives in my own family: they are very dear, though; cost me three and a half francs a piece. And then everybody knows that England is the only country where good manners, exactitude, or order, are to be learned; and next year I shall send my son there to school. He will then come back well-behaved, and a complete man of business." As in duty bound, I acknowledged the compliment paid to my native land, though it was the first time that I had heard our fame for good steel and good morals brought into such intimate association.

As evening drew on, there were signs of a little more life in the streets: laden wagons came in from the fields, women went in greater numbers to the fountains, and salad-washing became general. Suddenly there sounded a bugle-blast in the street; it was blown by a slender, dark-eyed, gipsy-featured man, who followed it by an oration in German, which provoked frequent peals of laughter from the bystanders, who came swarming up from all directions, while he told them a comedy would be played in the course of the evening by a company just arrived. As soon as his speech was finished, he took off his cap, saluted the listeners, and hurried off to wake the echoes and excite the curiosity of other parts of the town. The crowd was separating, when the priest came slowly by; immediately every head was uncovered, and he in return took off his shovel-hat and acknowledged the salutation. The old women mustered strong on the occasion, and their beefeaters' caps added much to the novelty of the scene.

The diligence, which should have arrived at seven o'clock, did not arrive; but no one appeared to be in the least concerned at the delay. What matters half an hour more or less? I had secured a seat, but was told that an outside place was out of the question, as nothing but luggage was carried on the roof. My ticket, or *bulletin*, as they call it, issued by the *Administration des Postes Suisses*, had fifteen *Observations* on the back, which I now had time to read. One of the fifteen declares that if you be late you forfeit your journey; but not a word about indemnity for the diligence being late.

The diligence came at last, at a quarter to eight. Then five-and-twenty minutes were consumed in changing horses and chattering. Reluctantly I seated myself in the *rotonde*, after arguing in vain for a place on the roof. Just on the edge of the town we saw the party of comedians, dressing under a wide-spreading tree, and after that there was nothing to divert us from the weariness of the prosy pace. At Sion there was another halt of forty minutes, while all the wheels were greased by the light of a torch; and from the number of spectators, one might have imagined that half the town had sat up to witness the operation. Here were twelve additional passengers waiting; our vehicle was filled; but it is the law that all shall be conveyed who present themselves: hence the *Administration des Postes Suisses* is obliged to provide *suppléments*, a sort of post-chaise to carry four, which follows in the wake of the diligence, and is on no account allowed to precede.

On we jogged about five miles an hour: it was stifling in the *rotonde;* and the confinement worked me into an irritation that grew at last into a tormenting toothache.

I repented then not having made the journey on foot. It was one in the morning when we arrived at Martigny, where I searched for *La Cygne,* and found it, and was rewarded by hearing that the house was so full of travellers that I must content myself with an improvised bed in the *salon,* or none. I was in no mood to make difficulties, and accepted what was offered; but the pillow brought no relief to the teasing pain.

CHAPTER VIII.

The clouds above me to the white Alps tend,
And I must pierce them, and survey whate'er
May be permitted, as my steps I bend
To their most great and growing region, where
The earth to her embrace compels the power of air.—BYRON.

Since I was man,
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard.—SHAKSPERE.

LA CYGNE remains associated in my memory with discomfort. Short as my night was to be, it was made still shorter by the torment of tooth-ache, which kept me awake till four, and when I got up at five, although the pain had ceased, I felt anything but refreshed, or fit for a climb to the clouds. There is virtue, however, in a good wash, and this, followed by a cup of *café noir*, reinvigorated me, and at six I started. Even at this early hour it was already hot and stifling in Martigny; the place, indeed, is notorious for its oppressive temperature in the summer season, and no one likes to linger in it. Half an hour's walking brought me to the left bank of the Dranse, and there begins the gradual rise of the road. While passing the path that leads to

Chamonix on the right, I caught a glimpse of the Col de Balme, which assured me of clear weather for some hours at least. The scenery has but little to recommend it; high hills shut in the valley, neither romantic in form nor well wooded. The cottages, villages, and their inhabitants, are alike miserable and dirty, not to be compared with those of the canton of Berne. Beggary is a trade: whole families, seeing you approach, come out of their houses, and range themselves at the road-side to solicit alms, and what they cannot get from compassion they will try to extort by importunity. "Monsieur," said a sturdy father as I passed, "Monsieur, you would do us a great pleasure if you would only give us some small trifle," at the same time casting a pathetic look on his wife and family of hopefuls:

For folk who seek to gather pelf,
By means not over nice,
Oft make their numerous babes a plea
To sanctify the vice.

I stopped, and looking him steadily in the face, replied, "I have not the least doubt of it." This assent seemed to embarrass him, and his wife then repeated the request. "Is not that your field?" I asked. "Is not that your garden? Go, then, work for your sous as I do for mine, and give up the dirty trade of begging." They listened in gloomy surprise, and without another word, turned and went into their house—I hope, to ruminate on my advice, and follow it. Here, in the Vallais, and in Piedmont, people who are not in want will beg, and travellers should make it a duty to discourage the degrading propensity. It is a Catholic canton, and you see many crosses and

painted images of the Virgin and the Saints by the wayside; and you perhaps incline to believe that what the people say in the adjoining Protestant canton is true, *Immer beten, immer betteln*—always praying, always begging. Some of the old women stick to you like a thistle bur, and it is only by very emphatic words that you can make them cease to haunt you with their ugly visages. One in particular was so pertinacious, that as a last resort, I tried a remedy recommended by the amusing author of *Voyages en Zigzag*, namely, a long cabalistic word. So, stopping suddenly, I looked her full in the face, and delivered an *Aldiborontiphoskiphorniostikos*, which had the desired effect, for with a bewildered stare she took to flight.

While in the Vallais contrasts with the canton of Berne will force themselves continually into your mind: there is neither the same industry nor the same effort against ignorance. Many of the Vallaisian villages have no school, and the only instruction given to the children is comprised in the teachings of the priest. To this want of enlightenment may, perhaps, be attributed the plodding habit of hand-labour in agricultural employments, in preference to the use of implements. Other cantons besides Vallais are in the same condition; and yet, taking Switzerland at large, one in nine of the population is at school; more than can be said of England. There are artisan schools too, where the rudiments and principles of various trades are taught.

It is only by a visit to an Alpine country that you can form a true idea of the ascent of a great mountain. In going up our British hills, we see all the time that we are on a hill, and get wide views all round us. Not so in the

Alps, for though in reality ascending a mountain, you are in fact going up a valley, which shuts you in on both sides, and by its depth and windings, deprives you of the broad mountain-views you expected, and gives a somewhat prosy character to your labour. Then, as regards the height: the place you set out from is already so elevated, that although you rise to 8,000 or 10,000 feet above the sea, you are at nearly half that height when you start. Kandersteg, for instance, is more than half way up the Gemmi, about the elevation of the top of Snowdon; and Chamonix is more than 4,000 feet above the sea, so that those who ascend Mont Blanc from thence are one-fourth of the way up, and have only three-fourths more to climb. From this it will be understood that the height of a mountain is not always a measure of the task you have to perform in what is called "going over" it.

Some of my friends in England had strongly urged me not to attempt the St. Bernard without a guide, because of the danger. Experience has, however, taught me that the services of a guide are needed less often than most people imagine, and I like best to be alone. On this mountain, too, you cannot go wrong: you have only to follow the road, which is an excellent one as far as St. Pierre, and is practicable for cars to within two hours of the hospice. You have the Dranse for a companion all the way; sometimes far above it, but mostly so near that its roar becomes almost insupportable. It tears along with the fury of a giant, and seems to be making perpetual efforts to leap from its stony bed; and fully realizes the wildest idea of a mountain river.

I stopped to breakfast at Orsières, and took a short nap on the grass, under a tree, at the outskirts of the village.

Between this place and Liddes the scenery improves, giving you more the impression of a mountainous region, and here was the zone of greatest heat for that day. It was so overpowering, that I began to question whether it was worth while to go farther; but I kept to my purpose, and did what the worthy knight in *Hudibras* is reported to have done—

> Cheered up myself with ends of verse,
> And sayings of philosophers,—

and treated myself to a pint of wine at Liddes, as a reward for perseverance.

Apart from the scenery, there is another kind of interest in the ascent of such mountains as the Alps—the witnessing of certain natural phenomena which you can only read about in lands less elevated. The mean temperature of the St. Bernard and some other Alpine summits is lower than at the North Cape far away in the Arctic circle. You consequently pass through different series of climate and of vegetation, representing on a smaller scale the aspects of nature seen in a voyage to the polar regions. Flowers and fruits, luxuriant vines, and all the trees of the forest, are around you at starting; fields are yellow with wheat, and gardens profusely fertile. You ascend about 2,000 feet; the profusion has diminished, the vines are tardy, and ere long refuse to accompany you. A little farther, and you leave behind the maize and buckwheat; walnuts lend you their shade for another thousand feet, and then give place to the beech, and crops of flax, hemp, or barley, which though they ought to stay below five thousand feet do, here and there, thrust themselves hardily into the zone above. Where the last wild cherries

are seen, there, as a rule, will be the last cottages and the last potatoes—about 6,000 feet, and grasses and minor plants become fewer in like proportion. Here is the zone of pines, some of magnificent growth; the climate, however, soon tells upon them, and the higher you mount the more dwarfish do they become, till at last the stunted and dwindling stragglers are left behind, and you come to creeping shrubs, and the hardy Alpine plants which have a battle for existence with frost and snow, and maintain it only by the vigour of the light at such elevations. Half way between the eighth and ninth thousand is the line of perpetual snow, and there, except in very rare instances, vegetation ceases, and the dominion of winter is perpetual. All this is to be seen in a day's journey; and if you go up on the northern side of the mountain, and descend on the southern, you will see how marked is the difference due to the warmer climate.

The road makes a sudden plunge in the forest of St. Pierre, and is so rugged and tortuous, that you see at once why this portion of the route gave more trouble and loss to Bonaparte in his celebrated passage than all the rest. The skeletons of unhappy Frenchmen are still sometimes discovered in crevices of the rocks. High up, on the left, a new road is being made to avoid the descent: it will be ready for use this year. While going along, my attention was attracted by distant shouts, and looking up, I saw the workmen all hastening from a particular spot, and making signs for some one at a distance to withdraw. At first I did not understand these signals as meant for me; at length, comprehending that a blast was about to take place, I sat down on a big stone, and waited the result. Ten minutes passed without any disturbance,

when, thinking I had misapprehended, I again went forward, but had scarcely passed a projecting crag, than there burst an explosion accompanied by the clattering fall of rocky masses that broke the silence, and woke up the sleeping echoes of the hills, which answered one another with fainter and fainter voice, as it seemed, for miles around. If there was danger, I had a fortunate escape.

Beyond St. Pierre you leave the valley and the pine-trees behind, and come upon a broad level of Alpine pasture, abounding as usual in flowers, and enlivened by the bells of the numerous grazing kine. Here the rhododendron grows in profusion. Frequent gangs of men were repairing the road; they all saluted me civilly as I passed, and neither they nor any one else during the whole ascent appeared to regard my journey as more than an ordinary walk, needing at that season no especial precautions. At the end of the pastures stands a big white house, known as the Cantine, often used by travellers who arrive late or are caught in a storm. Here the car-road terminates, and the hardest work of climbing begins.

The sky, which lower down I had found rather too clear, became overcast, and the large heavy precursor drops of a thunder-shower began to fall as I commenced the ascent of the rocks which rise black and steep from the verge of the soft green turf. The rugged path follows the windings of the Dranse, here diminished to a noisy brook, as it frets and foams in a tortuous course among the splintered masses of granite that upheave their gray heads in savage confusion. Vegetation becomes scantier at every step, and at length nothing but hardy mosses and lichens are to be seen. Owing to the general

backwardness of the season, the snow had but slightly melted, and lay thick and heavy in every nook and angle not exposed to the direct rays of the sun. To the right and left stretched a waste of snow; and, looking upwards, the scene was still more wintry and desolate, for there the snow lay not in patches, but in vast white slopes, unbroken save by the black and jagged rocks that rose in hummocks above the frozen surface. It was one of those marvellous contrasts for which Switzerland is so remarkable; and he who had not traversed the green pastures lying but a short distance below, might well doubt of their existence.

More and more sombre grew the scene as I climbed he rugged steep; the heavy clouds sank lower and lower, the wind howled dismally as it swept down from the neights, the rain seemed to have made up its mind for a settled pour, and lightning flashed and thunder bellowed with a vividness and power that might well be deemed the shriekings of the spirit of the mountains against the daring intruder. The clouds were so near my head that I feared to keep my umbrella up; and sheltering myself under some overhanging crags, I watched the sounding war. It was viewing Nature in a new aspect—in the very workshop and head-quarters of storms. What a ghastly glare lit up the driving mists and the hissing drifts of rain as the red lightning shot from the murky clouds, accompanied, rather than followed by stunning thunder-peals that echoed angrily through the darkened air! It was a tremendous spectacle: one that you gaze on with wondering awe, and will never forget! At the same time, it affords an instance of the sudden changes to which the higher regions of the globe are subject, and hence the risk to the inexperienced when traversing such altitudes.

Herein, more than in the wildness or dreariness of the way, consists their chief danger.

The clouds rolled slowly away, and in about twenty minutes the storm having moderated to a fitful shower, I again toiled upwards. The walking had become more irksome than before, stone and snow being alike slippery from the rain; and when foothold fails at almost every step, the fatigue of climbing an ascent is painfully increased. By-and-by I came to an unbroken field of snow, covering what, in ordinary seasons, is a green summer pasture, but this year deep and solid, there not having been warmth enough to melt it. Here I fell in with two workmen, bound also for the hospice; one of them complained of pain in his knee, and they were evidently much fatigued, for they could not keep up with me, and at the next bend in the track, I lost sight of them. Here the path began to rise again; and so frequent and exhausting were my slips, that I was compelled to stop every thirty paces to recover breath. On looking round during these halts, the prospect was by no means cheering: nothing but mist, snow, and a murky scowl; and, though they were not visible, there was the feeling that savage heights, strongholds of the tempest, rose towering on either hand. Now it began to rain again; the wind howled and shrieked more dismally than before; the clouds swooped, and so deepened the leaden gloom, that night seemed to have come. I looked at my watch—it was half-past four; so there were yet some hours to sunset. Still the difficulty of facing the wind and rain made me doubtful of getting to the summit of the pass, and I was beginning to discuss the possibilities of a return to the Cantine, when another turn showed me the hospice. Though

still far off, the sight reanimated me; and in the hope of reaching the friendly shelter, I again trudged onwards. Another quarter-hour brought me to the foot of the steepest slope of all, where the convent was no longer in view, and from which the mule-tracks diverged a considerable distance to the left, while a single trail of footsteps led directly upwards. I preferred to follow these as the shortest route, though I had to use my hands as well as my feet to secure my foothold. In this way I had mounted about one-third of the height, when another storm burst, compared with which the first was a zephyr. The rain fell in spouts and streams, dashing like a shallow river down the snow, hissing as it went, intermingled with rattling hail that beat mercilessly upon me, for keeping my umbrella up was out of the question. Now the lightning flashed again, and the thunder roared; and so deadly chill were the screaming blasts, that I was speedily benumbed as well as drenched, and, for the first time in my life, knew what it was to be cold to the bones. Every time I bent forward to dig my hands into the snow, the rain ran down my back, till I shuddered at its freezing temperature. The chances seemed growing desperate, when I spied some rocks on the left, and made towards them for the sake of firm footing for a few minutes. No sooner had I reached them, than a strange giddiness seized me, and I fell down in a half unconscious state, and lay for a time till the pelting of the storm roused me again, to hear the thunder roaring at my ears, rolling round and round, and even under me. I could not help looking up: the clouds lay close upon the rocks, leaving no room for the lightning to dart downwards, and it seemed to me that a lurid fire flashed through them from time to time in

a horizontal direction, and tore them asunder as it passed. Would there be no danger in standing upright? Whether or no, if I did not make an attempt to go on, the increasing cold would soon incapacitate me altogether. I rose to my feet, and crawled a little higher on the rock, but the giddiness again seized me, and there came over me a sense of sullen pleasure at the pelting of the rain, and indifference as to the result. Minutes are long under such circumstances, and three or four minutes may have passed, when almost involuntarily I started up, looked round, and shouted. No answer came but mocking echoes; the shout had disheartened me; it seemed a confession of weakness. However, I saw dimly through the blinding scud, a large black cross on the top of the crag: if that could be reached, there would be a hope of seeing the convent; so, mustering all my strength, I succeeded in climbing up to it, and putting my arm round it, I wiped my eyes for a fresh survey. Heaven be praised!—there is the convent! and nearer than I thought. Between me and it lay an untrodden bank of snow in the hollows of the rock. It was deep, and might be treacherous; but I had become desperate, and rushed across it, laughing and shouting under some wild, uncontrollable impulse, to the open door of the hospitable building. How I did it without falling has been ever since a mystery to me; but it was done. I sprang up the steps, and in another moment I was in the long passage, which runs from one end of the edifice to the other, and in safety. If ever a thanksgiving was spoken from the heart, it was there and then by me.

CHAPTER IX.

That house, the highest in the Ancient World,
And destined to perform from age to age
The noblest service, welcoming as guests
All of all nations and of every faith.—ROGERS.

C'est le domaine des glaces et des neiges, le palais de l'hiver, le royaume de la mort.—DUMAS.

A monk there was, a fayre for the maistrie,
A manly man, to ben an abbot able.—CHAUCER.

I WALKED two or three times up and down the long passage, trying to discover the way into the other parts of the building, or to make some one hear; at last seeing a light twinkling in what looked like a vault, with an entrance in the wall, I went in, and found myself in the kitchen. The cook was busy at his avocation, and savoury fumes filled the dim apartment, giving promise of good cheer; but there were more pressing wants to be first attended to. In answer to my inquiry, he conducted me to a lobby, where he pulled a long bell-rope that hung from the ceiling, and left me. Immediately a door opened, and one of the monks, whose look was highly prepossessing and intelligent, made his appearance. It was the *Père Clavandier*, or bursar of the convent. "Ah, monsieur," he said, as soon as he saw me, "how wet you are! But come this way, I will show you to a room."

I was indeed wet—dripping, as shown by the pool of water on the floor where I had stood. I followed the good father to a long corridor, with a number of doors on each side of it, one of which he opened, and said, "There is your chamber." Owing to the cold, it was with difficulty I could speak to express my thanks. I shivered from head to foot, as though afflicted with a violent palsy; but I stammered a reply. "We can lend you everything you want for a change," continued the monk, seeing my condition. "Get your wet clothes off as soon as you can, and come in to the fire." My knapsack was dry enough inside, and contained all I wanted; and receiving my assurance of this, the father was leaving the room, when he came back and asked if I had seen any other travellers on my way up. I mentioned the two workmen and their weary condition. "Oh," he answered, "I had expected some gentlemen;" and went away. Strange hospitality, I thought, while throwing off my wet garments, which seems to care only for gentlemen!

What a comfort it was to put on dry clothing in that simple chamber, which seemed the more snug, as the storm was still raging without, and the rain and hail beat furiously against the little panes of the window. I was too benumbed to be expeditious; at length, having finished, I made my way to the sitting-room. A lady and two gentlemen were sitting by the wood fire that burned cheerfully on the hearth. They all rose at my entrance, and said, "Do you speak English?"

"I believe so," was my answer.

"Oh, we are glad of that, because we shall be able to talk."

They were three Americans, who had passed me in a car

near Orsières early in the day. Room was made for me close to the fire; and seated there, sipping a cup of hot wine which the attendant brought at my request, I soon felt new life and warmth circulating through my veins, though violent fits of shivering would still seize me from time to time. Meanwhile the table was being laid for the six o'clock repast—dinner or supper, as the case may be; and at the hour, the *Père Clavandier*, inviting us to seat ourselves, breathed a silent prayer, made the sign of the cross on his breast, and served out the soup. As we were eating, he told us that he had at once sent out two of the convent porters with bread and wine to look for the two workmen, who were found in a pitiable condition, one of them scarcely able to crawl. "*Pauvres malheureux!*" he added, "they are now safe in the common room." I had misjudged the worthy father.

The supper was excellent; it had probably been cooking since noon, for at this height five hours are needed to boil that which would be done in two at the lower level. Besides the soup, we had *bouilli*, ham, and two kinds of roast meat, with potatoes—these were the best I had eaten since leaving England, and fully made up for want of variety in the vegetable department. Excepting a few meagre lettuces which struggle into existence in what is called the garden of the hospice during the month of August, potatoes are the only vegetables grown by the monks; but the fields are lower down the mountain. Fortunately, they are nearly always good, and in the low and uniform temperature of the convent cellars can be kept for two years. Those we ate were grown in 1851. We had a dessert, too, of stewed apples, nuts, and raisins; and the wine, supplied without stint, was capital: it is brought up

from the sunny vineyards of Piedmont, and the fathers do well to treat themselves to a little sunshine in this way in their bleak abode, especially as it costs no more to carry up good wine than bad. Without doubt, a generous diet is indispensable to health when people live year after year at a height of 8,000 feet above the sea-level, and where summer has been known to fail at times of driving away the frost. Even in the best seasons the spot is liable to great and sudden fluctuations of temperature, and is as cheerless as can well be imagined; nothing like a tree is to be seen on the tremendous heights which hem in the pass, shutting out all view of any fairer prospect in the distance. Dreary, indeed, would be life in such a place without some high sustaining motive!

After dinner we drew round the hearth again, enjoying its warmth, for the temperature of the evening was within two degrees of the freezing-point. The fire was replenished from time to time by the attendant from a supply of small logs in a locker at one side of the room; but not with a lavish hand, as every stick of wood has to be brought from a distance on the backs of mules. The Americans were inclined to be talkative, and my having once lived for some years in their country served to establish us on a friendly footing. We talked about the New World and the Old, about our travelling experiences; but I could not make out why they went from one part of the world to another except it was for the sake of saying, "I have been there." They appeared to have overlooked all those things which enlarge the mind and ripen its judgments; and their impression of Europe in general and England in particular was, that without 100,000 dollars a year it would be impossible to live in either. One of the three

was by his own account a theological student; he must have been an idle one, for his learning was a little of one thing and less of another; he was, however, the only one of the trio who made any pretensions to speak French; the other two, his brother and sister-in-law, knew no language but their own vernacular. Among other matters, he told me he had called to see Daubigné, at Geneva, and strongly counselled me to do the same; for "you know," he said, "he is a smart writer, and it's worth while going to have a look at him." After such an infliction as that, it struck me the best service I could render the author of the *History of the Reformation* would be to leave him undisturbed. I soon found out that the student was a pretender in more ways than one; for whenever he translated from French into English for the benefit of his relatives, he always gave it a ridiculous turn, and ended with a foolish laugh. He asked such silly questions, too, and spat so frequently across from his chair into the fire, in which his brother imitated him, that I began to be ashamed of speaking the same language as those who paid so little regard to propriety.

Judging from the frequency with which the *Père Clavandier* was called out of the room, his post is no sinecure; but however numerous the interruptions, the same affable, benevolent manner was always apparent. He has a youthful look, a pleasing expression of countenance, and a dark intelligent eye, that scans you while you speak, as though seeing all that you leave unsaid; and his conversational powers fit him admirably for his post. He wished to know the particulars of my struggle with the storm; and when I had related them, he replied "If it had been winter instead of summer, and snow in-

stead of rain, you would have been a dead man in half an hour. That is the way with our mountains; one minute sunshine, the next a frightful storm, perilous to all within its influence."

The average number of travellers who stop at the convent in a year is 16,000: they are much more numerous in winter than is commonly supposed, for the pass of the St. Bernard is the main thoroughfare from Geneva to Turin. On certain feast-days, when the neighbouring peasantry cross the mountain to keep the celebration, 300 persons have been fed and lodged in the convent and adjoining building at once. On one occasion, the father told us, the number was 600; and a party of rustics wandering about the building in search of sleeping-quarters, found an unoccupied chamber with two beds, of which some six or eight took unceremonious possession. This room had been appropriated to two English gentlemen who had arrived during the day, and when bedtime came, to their great surprise and disappointment, they found the apartment occupied by the peasants, who were snoring like swine, and from whose unwashed bodies and dirty garments a most insufferable odour exhaled. "The poor gentlemen," added the monk, "had to make shift with a few chairs here in the sitting-room."

All this time the storm kept on with unabated violence; the father rose occasionally and looked from the window down the pass, as though anxious for the safety of any who might be exposed to the tempest. The American student, finding perhaps that I could make myself better understood than he, asked me to put certain questions to the *Père*, which were more inquisitive than decorous.

"Don't you know," I replied, "that one does not ask such questions as those in civilized society?"

"Well," he answered, "I guess there wouldn't be much harm done if you did."

Presently the sound of hoofs was heard outside: the bell rang, "There is another traveller!" said the father, starting up, and hastening to receive him. The new-comer was also a theological student,—a Waldensian, and pupil of Daubigné's, on his way from Geneva to his home in Savoy. He had come from St. Pierre on a mule, and was so chilled from exposure, that he could not speak; his jaw was set as with tetanus, and the muscles of his face so contracted as to give him the appearance of grinning horribly. Shelter and warmth, however, produced their due effect upon him, and before long he joined us, dressed from head to foot in a suit lent him from the convent stores; and a supper was put before him not less bountiful than that which had been served to us. His shiverings made me think of what my own condition had been a few hours earlier, and even then the sensation of cold had not left my bones. I bethought myself of the remedy, and asked the attendant if it would be possible to have a cup of tea? "*Oui, monsieur, très possible,*" he answered, and set about preparing it. The *Père* happening to come in when it was ready, he poured out the tea, and handed a cup to each of us; it was the first I had drunk since leaving England, and, as I had anticipated, it effectually removed the last remains of my chilliness. After the Waldensian had warmed himself, he told us something of his life and labours: he is now a preacher among his own countrymen, and visits Geneva once a year for purposes connected with his calling. I asked him if the Waldenses

retained the earnest faith and simple habits which had so long characterized them. "Though it pains me to say it," he replied, "I must answer, no. We have lost many of our simple habits, and with them I fear much of our earnest faith. Times are changed. Our young men now go away for a few years to the great cities to try to save a little money: and while there, they lose what is worth more than money,—the simplicity and trustfulness of heart which they once had. They come back again, bringing with them city thoughts and city habits, dangerous and often fatal, and so we are sinking into indifference, if not something worse." He said this with a sad voice, and added, that strenuous efforts were being made to effect a favourable change. Cromwell and Milton were next introduced into the conversation; names, he said, well known to his people, and still held in high reverence and esteem among them.

Not without reason is the Protector yet remembered at the foot of the Alps, for as Bishop Burnet tells us:—"Cromwell had two signal occasions given him to show his zeal in protecting the Protestants abroad. The Duke of Savoy raised a new persecution of the Vaudois: so Cromwell sent to Mazarin, desiring him to put a stop to that; adding, that he knew well they had that Duke in their power, and could restrain him as they pleased. And if they did not he must presently break with them. Mazarin objected to this as unreasonable. He promised to do good offices; but he could not be obliged to answer for the effects they might have. This did not satisfy Cromwell, so they obliged the Duke of Savoy to put a stop to that unjust fury; and Cromwell raised a great sum for the Vaudois, and sent over a

messenger to settle all their concerns, and to supply all their losses."

Some part of the amount then raised was funded, and, with one or two interruptions, the interest has ever since been paid, yearly, to the Waldenses, who, much to their praise, apply it all to educational purposes. Dating their residence in Piedmont from the eighth century, they claim to be the earliest reformers; and now there are about twenty thousand of them living in the valleys around Pinerola. There they have parish schools, and hamlet schools, and a central school or college, from which the students go to take their degrees in Switzerland. Their pastors and schoolmasters are generally earnest-minded men, retaining much of the olden simplicity, and content with very modest payment. Only within the past few years have they been able to live out of their native valleys without annoyance or molestation; but they have now a church in Turin, and are permitted to publish two newspapers. They receive small annual grants also from Prussia and Holland.

Visitors to the convent usually rise to attend the six o'clock mass, but when I woke in the morning, the inducements were in favour of lying quiet, for the wind and the rain still had it their own way outside, and showed every disposition to keep us prisoners for the day. I took a survey of my apartment, or cell, as it would be called in monastic language: it was long and narrow, with two beds on one side, draped with dark chequered hangings; quilts of the same, and a generous supply of blankets, and with sheets very coarse but very clean. There were a few wooden chairs, a double washstand, strips of carpet at the bedside, and a stove. On the wall, above the washstand,

hung a looking-glass, and on each side of it a framed print—one of *St. Petrus*, the other *St. Josephus, Jesus Nutritius*. The window and door were both double, such an arrangement being indispensable for the preservation of a uniform temperature in winter.

On rising, I found my clothes thoroughly dried, and placed on a chair outside the door. Not the slightest trace remained of the previous day's fatigues: indeed, such toils as these, unlike what is experienced in over-exertion in the ordinary business of life, leave you the stronger, and the better prepared to encounter new labours. Breakfast not being a set meal at the hospice, each visitor may please himself as to the hour of taking it, *café au lait* and the etceteras being in readiness from seven o'clock to ten. A third traveller had arrived during the night, a Swiss merchant living at Turin, going to Berne on business: he told us that while coming up he was almost blown off his mule's back by the furious blasts that swept down from the snowy heights. I told him of my adventure, on which he observed, "So, you came up from Martigny alone, and without a guide; let me tell you it was courageous, and not a little hazardous." "Nevertheless," I answered, "here I am alive and well, and without knowing beforehand that courage was required for the feat."

We fell to talking on political matters: he deplored the jealousies and bickerings going on among the cantons, and said that until the Swiss could live in concord among themselves they would never cease to be more or less the victims of more powerful nations. He denounced Austrian interference and Italian intolerance. "Business called me once," he added, "to Naples. I went well provided with letters of recommendation to some of the first houses

in that city; but when I landed, the police, after examining all these documents, said—

"'But, monsieur, do you not know so-and-so?'

"'No.'

"'Nor so-and-so?'

"'No.'

"'Nor so-and-so?—Ah! hum! there may be some difficulty.'

"'What! are not those names good enough? Must I know the king in order to be permitted to land here?' It was a petty trick, done on purpose to annoy, because I was a Swiss."

Here the *Père Clavandier* remarked, that looking out on the world from his position,—seeing the way in which nations acted among themselves and towards each other, and after hearing so many and such various opinions from all sorts and conditions of men from different countries, he had come to the conclusion that a despotism was the best form of government. Men required keeping down; it was best for them. On this point the merchant and I joined issue with him, and we debated it briskly for some time; but the father was too expert a dialectician to be easily confuted. And yet with this inclination for despotism, when the conversation afterwards turned on creeds and doctrines, he said that if he were to become a Protestant, he should adopt that form as professed by the English Independents, for he thought theirs the best. Among other questions, I asked him "If the Pope would go to Paris to crown Louis Napoleon?" "*Jamais!*" he answered, and with such emphasis as showed he must have good reason for believing that the coronation ceremony, when it does take place, will not be graced by his Holiness.

While we were talking, a slim, dark-eyed Italian arrived, covered from head to foot in waterproof; he was coming up the evening before with his wife and family, when the storm stopped them at the Cantine. They were now, it appeared, not far behind, and we went to the door to watch for them. Presently, the wife came up, panting and slipping over the snow, and wet through, for she had no waterproof.

"Oh!" she cried, when near enough to be heard, "my children will perish. The mules fall through the snow there by the side of the Dranse."

Two men, provided with poles, were immediately sent off to assist; meanwhile the American student, turning to his brother, said, "Do you hear that? The children are dancing as they come up! ha! ha! ha!"

I had been somewhat vexed at his unpleasant manners, and interrupted him with, "Nothing of the sort!"

"Well, what did she say then? I guess I'm right."

"No, you are not right. She said the mules that carry the children sink through the snow by the side of the Dranse."

"There, now, Alf," exclaimed his sister, "I was sure that people didn't say all the silly things to you that you have interpreted to us." Whereupon the student held his peace. Soon the mules arrived, bearing four little children in panniers.

The Swiss merchant next took his departure, his business being too urgent to allow of his waiting for better weather. I asked permission to see the library, and the *Père* led me to the room, which contains about 2,000 volumes, mostly French, though there are many in other languages which have been given as presents. He offered

me the choice of any that I liked to read. In an adjoining room are a collection of fossils, and specimens of the geology and fauna of the neighbourhood, but much in want of arrangement; and relics of the temple, which the Romans once built to Jupiter, near where the convent now stands. I saw also the observatory, in which daily readings are taken of the barometer, thermometer, and rain gauge, for comparison with others taken at Geneva. As, at this height, the barometer tube is but twenty-one inches in length, the comparisons are the more interesting. The father next took me into the private apartments occupied by himself and the monks; they have polished floors, and are comfortably though plainly furnished. It was not all dry asceticism, for one of the occupants sat playing on the piano. These rooms were all heated by the stoves; constant residence probably rendering artificial warmth more necessary to the inmates than to visitors. I wished to see what the American called the "lazzaroni room"—the apartment in which the humbler class of travellers are lodged,—but so offensive was the smell that issued on opening the door, that I was glad to make a hasty retreat. "I am obliged to watch, and send some of them off every day," said the father, "or they would never go, so comfortable do they find themselves here in comparison with their miserable homes and poor fare. They seldom see meat; and when we send food in to them, we are obliged to serve a lump to each, or there would be a great fight for the largest portions."

Two, who had already stayed more than a day, were sent away, notwithstanding the rain. One of them, whose body was bent almost at a right angle to his legs, looked more like a bundle of pieces of old sacks, with

huge shock-head, than anything else I could liken him to. The tones of his voice were as repulsive as his looks. A more apparently miserable object I never saw.

I did not fail to visit the chapel, nor to drop my thank-offering into the *Tronc aux aumônes.* No charge is made for the hospitalities of the house, and the amount of donation is left entirely to yourself. The rule among travellers who can afford it is, not to give less than would be paid at an hotel. Then two or three of us made a sortie to look at the dead-house, or we walked up and down the passage talking and patting the rough coats of the noble dogs that fraternise with the guests with real canine cordiality. At times we read by the fire, or turned over the leaves of the visitors' book, where, among the latest entries, we saw the name of *Harriet Beecher Stowe.* So the stormy day wore away. At length the weather gave signs of clearing, and at four in the afternoon I started, in company with the Waldensian student, and a trader of Courmayeur, who had been in bed since noon of the previous day, for St. Remy, on the Sardinian side. The paths were like little brooks, from the abundance of rain, and made the footing by the side of the half-frozen lake rather precarious. In five minutes we had lost sight of the convent, and passed the column which marks the frontier, and so easy was the descent in comparison with that on the Swiss side, that we reached the miserable village St. Remy in an hour and a half. Here we were stopped, at the *Corpo di guarda delle Dogane Nazionali*, for the *visa* of passports and inspection of knapsacks, which cost us nothing but a few minutes' delay, and the unbuckling of a few straps. I intended to walk all the way to Aosta, but the student wishing to arrive in time to catch a diligence persuaded us to join him in

hiring a return *char*, in which, for a trifle over two francs each, we pursued our journey down the valley. A few yards from the village a large stone lying in the road left us scarcely room to pass; it had been dislodged by the cattle grazing on the heights above, and rolled down till it found a resting place. Hence a traveller needs to be watchful when passing the foot of a slope where cows are feeding, as accidents, at times, happen from the loose stones which are easily set a-rolling. I asked the driver the name of the brawling brook we crossed more than once in the first few miles: "We call it the *Ru*," he answered; *ru* being the local word for rivulet.

All at once, and as it seemed without the usual gradation, we left the firs, and came to magnificent walnut-trees; we passed the mouth of the valley, which was pointed out to me as the Cornwall of Piedmont; we saw grand scenery, and squalid humanity, images of saints and tall crosses; and when it was almost too dark to discover objects, we dashed and splashed through the streaming kennels of the narrow streets of Aosta—caught a glimpse of Calvin's monument—and, passing under a low gateway, were in the square courtyard of a Piedmontese inn. The student went off to the diligence, the trader sat down to macaroni and cheese, and I, after a cup of coffee, with *grisane* and bread-and-butter, went to bed in a most unprepossessing room, which, even keeping the window wide open could not freshen; and with only a single decanter of water for all my ablutions. I could not get more; and when I saw dust on the looking-glass as thick as velvet, and the never-scrubbed hue of the floor, I made haste to forget them in sleep.

CHAPTER X.

Mean in their discourses, and dirty in their practices.—SOUTH.

Tis pleasant enough in the sun, were it not for the flies. Look! there's a lizard. Come you here, little run-about.—THE SAINT'S TRAGEDY.

> O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee,
> Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
> Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer,
> I worshipped the Invisible alone.—COLERIDGE.

APART from inclination to be early abroad, the sight of my chamber by daylight was sufficient to drive me forth betimes the next morning. Sunshine did not by any means improve the appearance of the dirty floor or the dusty furniture, nor mitigate the sickening smell. There was but one redeeming circumstance—there were no fleas. It is one not to be thought lightly of, as is well known to those who have been kept awake by the *pulex* tribes of southern lands; and to an unaccustomed ear there is something singularly significant in the inquiry which you frequently hear among travellers in Piedmont or Italy—"Are there many fleas there?" so that sleeping quarters may be planned for those places which have "only a few."

More welcome than ever was the fresh air of the ...kn. courtyard; and looking down from the balustraded ...nd es upon the vine which climbed the pillars, and

flung its leafy branches and slender tendrils far over the open space, the want of cleanliness was the more felt by contrast with a beautiful object. While drinking my cup of *café noir*, I remonstrated with the waiter on the dirty condition of the apartments, at which he really was or pretended to be surprised, and said, "If we had only known that Monsieur would think his bedroom dirty, we might have cleaned it. *Mais, quand on ne le sait-pas!*" To argue with people who do not know that dirt *is* dirt, is clearly lost labour: perhaps I had stumbled on the worst inn in Aosta; but I have since met a friend, who tells me that he has visited the same city twice with his wife, and tried all the hotels, and that they are all alike bad and odoriferous. "We then went," he said, "to a private house, and engaged a room, in which to eat our meals; but here we were no better off, for it was equally nasty. In fact, the whole town stinks, and you can only get rid of your disgust by leaving it." One might almost fancy that the smells had migrated thither from Cologne. For my own part, I was impatient to get away, and soon after five, took a turn through some of the streets, and started for Courmayeur. On asking what had become of my companion of the night before: "*Il s'est soulé, Monsieur*," answered the waiter. He had gone to bed so full of Bacchus, that there was little chance of his being afoot before noon.

An old arched gateway, an amphitheatre, and a bridge, all in ruins, remain to show that Aosta was once held by the Roman cohorts. They are interesting only to the antiquary. The place fully realises your idea of an Italian town: there are the massive white stone houses, with small grated windows, heavy unpanelled doors and shutters, thickly studded with the large heads of iron nails,

and shops which are only stalls. Such a style of architecture carries you back to the day when houses were built for defence as well as for residence, and here in this warm fertile region, where the natives do not feel themselves called on to dig coal or spin cotton for all the rest of mankind, it is easy to believe that but little change has taken place since the last of the cohorts left the city. In these days it is a distinction to have stood still, if but for a century.

Although early, many of the shops were open; among them smithies were numerous, and the clink of hammers sounded from one end of the street to the other. At the doors rude agricultural implements hung for sale, and above the stall-board a quantity of tablets, rings, discs, and other articles made of iron, apparently for ornament, but of which I could not guess the use. The bakers' shops displayed a tempting variety of bread, and piles of *grisane*, and as good too in quality as in appearance—far superior to that which the Swiss make on the other side of the mountain. Every thoroughfare was spoiled by the stream of muddy water flowing down the centre, not confined in a sunk channel, but free to choose its own course. The consequence is, that in some places it approaches so near to the houses as to leave but little room to pass, and forms so wide a channel, that if you wish to cross you must wade through; it is too broad to jump, and there are no bridges. These streams are derived from the ceaseless flow of the fountains, and if properly controlled, would clean, and not defile the town.

Straight as an arrow runs the road for the first two or three miles, presenting all the effect of a shady avenue in the distance, and on emerging from the street, you see beautifully wooded hills rising on either hand, leaving a

hollow about a mile in width between them. This is the celebrated valley of Aosta. Here fertility, luxuriant vegetation, and bold scenery, combine to make up a charming landscape. Here and there a square white church tower, with a short pointed spire, peeps from the mass of foliage; fields of maize, wheat, hemp, and artemisia—that species of wormwood from which the well-known cordial *absinthe* is distilled—grow on each side of the road. The latter, with its pale blue flowers, contrasts agreeably with the dark-green patches of maize. Long rows of white columns one above another, on the adjacent heights, show where the ground is terraced for the growth of vines, and in places where the soil is favourable, they are brought down to the very edge of the road. These stone columns are the outer support of a strong trellis, about six feet wide, of which the inner edge rests on a row of posts, immediately succeeded by others, with only a narrow passage between; and in this way whole acres are covered with a frame-work over which the vines run in graceful profusion. At some of the taverns they are made to droop over the road, and thus form a most pleasing shelter to those who stop for refreshment. Here and there are clumps of walnut-trees, that have all the appearance of a forest, and groups of apple-trees, and ranks of poplars in the distance that serve as a frame to certain portions of the landscape. Wild convolvulus, golden rod, and many unfamiliar flowers, grow in profusion by the side of the road, and cheat the wayfarer into the idea that he is walking through a garden, where lizards play at hide-and-seek on old walls and sunny banks.

Strange, that where nature has done so much, man should be found in such a low condition. In these

smiling valleys, goître, crétinism, and other deformities have established their head quarters; and the hideously disgusting objects that meet your view, completely banish the idea and feelings inspired by the scenery. One man I met—a wild unkempt creature—had a double goître, and went staggering along as though ready to fall under his load. There are ingenious theories by which this frightful disease is accounted for; but whatever may be the means of prevention prescribed, cleanliness is the most obvious, and it might be worth while to test its efficacy against that of iodine. Where people live mostly on uncooked vegetables, and do not know when they are dirty, there needs but little inquiry as to the causes of disease.

Here, as elsewhere on the continent, the land is parcelled out in small holdings, and the tenant, or *ouvrier*, digs and ploughs on his own account. I fell in with one of these proprietors, and asked him what was the state of feeling of the people of the neighbourhood—whether content or not? "*Vous voyez*," he said, in reply; "we are all pretty well satisfied. We don't get rich, but then we have enough, such as it is. The ground never refuses to pay us back for the labour we bestow on it; and one gathers his walnuts and makes oil, another plucks his grapes and makes wine; and then there are the maize, the wheat, the barley, and the rye, besides grass and other things; and all these put together yield as much as we want, and something over. We don't trouble ourselves with politics; the people at Turin attend to that, and so, monsieur, on the whole, we are content." The peasant was a shrewd specimen of his class, and from what I afterwards saw, there was no reason to doubt the truth of

his statements. Still, it would be a mistake to set the region down as the Happy Valley.

The road is excellent; but when approaching a town you see a number of houses blocking up the highway with what looks like a narrow alley between them. This alley you find on coming nearer, to be the main thoroughfare; it is the *grande rue*, or High Street of the village, and such a street as would not be easy to find out of the Sardinian states. If you imagine the people to have collected lumps of stone of different sizes, and flung them down from their housetops, you will have a very good idea of the paving. Then if you fill all the hollows and interstices with the waste water of the fountain, slops from the houses, and unsavory refuse of all kinds, and introduce a pig prowling in the corners, and a few cocks and hens scratching everywhere, another feature of the street will be complete. Instead of glass, most of the windows have an iron grating, or a shutter only, which, when closed, excludes air as well as light; and if the architecture be solid, it is so rough and rude, especially in the interior, that you cannot imagine the word *home* ever being applied to such buildings. No wonder that the people spend most of their time out of doors, crouching down at the foot of the walls, seldom speaking, and looking up with vacant stare as you pass, if not too deeply absorbed in searching one another's heads for developments which are not phrenological. No wonder, too, as recent events have shown, that such people can, by appeal to their prejudices, be excited into a fanatical outbreak!

This description applies to all the places through which you pass between the St. Bernard and Courmayeur, with certain differences dependent on locality. At Villeneuve,

for instance, there are iron-works, and the noise of ponderous hammers breaks the silence; fewer idlers squat about, and in almost every other house you see nail-makers at work, who greet you with "*Salut, monsieur,*" as you pass. Nearly every peasant you meet on the road proffers the same salutation, or "*Serviteur,*" and with somewhat of a self-important air, should he happen to have on his red baize coat, which in this region is considered as "dress," and is always worn on visits, holidays, or any important occasion of business or pleasure. Then in another village will be seen some scores of cows or goats, making a most bewildering though musical jingle with their bells, waiting till the herdboy has finished his gossip and drives them farther. The passing of these animals appears to be not less attractive to the inhabitants than was the dashing mail-coach in an English village some twenty years ago. Another mile or two, and you come upon a party of charcoal-burners, black and grimy men and women, busy around their large smoking heaps, or packing the charred wood on racks, or in wagons, for the ironworks. Then each place seems to have its own special protector or protectress, in the shape of a wooden doll, dressed in a few tawdry rags, nailed inside the hollow of a block of stone. I tried to learn what "idea" these emblems represented to the minds of the peasantry; but every one that I asked shied at the question, and gave no direct answer.

A little beyond Arvier there was a small cross on the bank, with this inscription:—"*Par charité, un Pater et un Ave pour l'âme de Clemène fille de Léonard Liabel.*" Large wooden crosses, too, are frequent by the roadside, as well as in the Vallais; and when you see the pains

taken in the erection and preservation of these, you cannot help wishing that a portion of the same care had been bestowed on the planting of finger-posts. Why should one side of the mountains have all the crosses, and the other all the way-wisers? I could not find a satisfactory because. Savonarola said, among other candid opinions for which he was burnt, that in the early ages of the church, the chalices were of wood and the priests of gold, but that in his day, the reverse was the fact, the chalices being gold and the priests wood. If this be still true, it may help towards a solution.

The valley narrows as you ascend, and becomes wilder and more mountainous: the river Doire, which at first was only heard, is seen swerving its glacier-coloured waters along on the left: fir-trees and heath, wild thyme and stone crop, begin to appear, and in places the disruption of the hills is so small, that a frowning gorge is produced. It is so at Ivrogne; and as the road creeps up and down on the face of the precipice, the views obtained of the tortuous glen beneath, are wondrously wild and romantic. The bridges you cross are mere platforms of wood that span chasms in the rocks, and if these were removed, friend or foe would find it alike difficult to advance or recede. Whatever may have been your emotions in the Swiss valleys, not till you have penetrated the valleys of Piedmont will you know what nature can effect with the addition of a southern climate and southern vegetation. To ramble from one to the other, feasting the eye with their varied and magnificent scenery, would be delightful recreation for a summer holiday.

Owing, perhaps, to the rain of the day before, or to the great depth of the valley, the route was infested by swarms

of flies; more than I had ever expected to see again out of New York. While taking my breakfast at Ivrogne, the butter and sugar were so covered by them as to appear transformed into little mountains of flies,—a sight by no means appetizing. They buzzed, too, in such numbers about the room and over the coffee-cup, that it was difficult to avoid swallowing some of the pertinacious insects. I was glad to get on the road again, where their annoyance was somewhat milder, and where every step, by taking me to a higher level, raised me gradually above their stratum of predacity.

Morgex, with its tall church tower, visible for miles around, is in some respects an exception to the other villages in the valley, being less huddled together, and less dirty. Wishing to see the inside of the tavern, and to taste Piedmontese beer, I went into the *Lion d'Or*. A tinker sat mending pots and kettles by the side of the door, the reception-room contained the usual furnishing of wooden forms and tables, at one of which two workmen were eating a dinner that smelt strongly of garlic. The walls are, perhaps, whitened when the people think of it, which is—never! The bread and *grisane* were good: the latter is a species of bread made in lengths of about two feet, and the size of the little finger, baked a pale brown colour, and eats very short and crisp. It is served in a long, narrow basket, and at the *table d'hôtes* of this region, a bundle of it is laid in front of every guest. The cheese was so dirty that I had to cut a thick slice off before I could venture to cut for myself; it was something like what is called "blue-milk cheese" in Westmoreland. The beer is kept in stone bottles, resembling those used for Seltzer water, it was dark-coloured and cloudy-looking,

but not unpalatable, and not dear, as the whole charge for my lunch was but fivepence.

One of my boot-soles had become loose, and knowing the stiff work it would have to undergo on the morrow, I looked about for a shoemaker. There was a shop a few yards farther up the street, but though the key was in the door, it was locked. "He is gone to dinner," cried a man sitting on the opposite side of the street, and, guessing my wishes, he added; "I'll go and tell him;" and away he ran, while the women who sat on the same bench knitting, invited me to take a seat till his return. Presently, the cordwainer, a young man, made his appearance, and unlocking the door of his den, begged me to follow. While he stitched the sole, we talked of many matters, for he seemed pleased to exchange words with a stranger. I inquired whether Morgex was remarkable for honesty, seeing that he could leave the key in his door, and boots and shoes on the stall, while he went to dinner. He could not answer for honesty; but he had never lost anything, except when one of the *gardes champêtre* carried off a pair of boots, and kept them for three days, as a sort of caution, and to show what might happen from too much trustfulness.

The sum of his remarks will, perhaps, be best given in a collected form:—"I was born in Turin; came here a few years ago, thinking there was more chance of bettering myself than in the city. Felt that it would not do to follow the example of the natives, who are the laziest and most ignorant in Europe, so taught myself French, and picked up something of their frog-dialect; for at first it seemed to me more like the croaking of frogs than anything else. Now I can make myself understood

by those who want fine work, and those who want coarse work. I get five or six francs for a pair of boy's shoes; they will bear four solings afterwards, if of Piedmontese leather, which is good—very much better than what is made here in this duchy of Aosta. I get nearly all my leather from Turin, and when I have saved 1,000 francs, shall be able to do a good business in other things as well as shoemaking. The people here don't care for knowledge: money is what they think of most. Some of the ambitious ones go off to Turin, and follow the profession of sweep for two or three years, and when they come back they are the *gens d'ésprit* of the neighbourhood, as though crawling up the chimneys of cleverer people had made them clever also. It is easier to intimidate than to conciliate them: they are given to be suspicious; and when they come to have fifteen or twenty cows, their greatest happiness is to lie in bed all the winter, and never care to move till the warm weather comes again." When the stitching was finished, the shoemaker, to prolong my stay, cleaned my boots without hurrying himself, and he would willingly have detained me in conversation all the afternoon; but Mont Blanc was before me, so I paid him his charge of fourpence and departed.

The first glimpse of the mighty mountain is usually obtained on emerging from the defile of Ivrogne, but the clouds of yesterday still hung thick in the distance, and occasionally sent down a slight shower. At length the sun shone brighter and hotter, and the cloudy bank that had lain uppiled before me all the day, broke away in a few places, and showed patches of a huge dark mass behind. On the left some foaming cascades come leaping down a thousand feet, and where they make their final plunge

into the Doire, you feel the full force of what Wordsworth calls

> The everlasting blasts of waterfalls.

A little farther, and a sharp rise of the road enables you to look down on the green meadows and dark woods of Prè St. Didier: there rises the Cramont, a turfy slope on one side and savage cliffs on the other: yonder is the road to the Little St. Bernard, and the next ascent will show you still grander objects. Ever the clouds grew thinner, and a sense of wondering fear fell upon me, as looming through them, some of the gigantic needles that stand as a guard of honour around Mont Blanc, were dimly revealed. Though the greater heights were still shrouded the lower ones were coming into view, and presently I saw the Col du Géant, and the snow-capped crags that stretch from it far to the right, and I sat down to gaze my fill of Mont Blanc. The clouds were floating away in fleecy masses, leaving greater part of the range standing full up in the sunlight, and lights and shadows played on the grim cliffs and green slopes. Here the snows are, indeed, eternal; and on all sides the handiwork of the Great Maker is seen on such a scale of grandeur and sublimity as you have never before beheld!

It was not yet three when I reached Courmayeur, where, having quartered myself at the *Hôtel de l'Union,* I went at once out to the meadows, content to sit on a turfy bank and gaze. Cloud after cloud melted from the summit: the Giant's Tooth appeared, and all the rocky ridge away to the Grande Jorasse. There was the entrance of the Val Ferret, there the Val d'Entrèves, there with cone of snow rises Mont Chetif, there the precipices

of the Cramont, so abrupt and lofty that to descend them seems impossible, and yet Professor Forbes once came down that way to save a *détour*. Cosy-looking cottages are scattered about; yonder are the baths and village of La Saxe, and there the houses and church of Courmayeur in full relief against the clearing sky—a panorama as striking in its contrasts as in its magnitude. Nor was the charm of movement wanting: the noisy Doire flashed and foamed in the distance, and grass and grain rose and fell in mimic waves as the gladsome breeze swept through the valley. In such a presence and such circumstances rest was doubly renovating!

It seemed almost a misfortune to have to think of food in such a spot: but one must eat if mountains are to be climbed; and when the tocsin of the *table d'hôte* sounded at five o'clock, I went back to the hotel. Dinner commenced with what was to me a novel course: the waiter came round with a large lump of butter on a dish from which each person cut a portion, and betook himself to eating it with the bread or *grisane*, of which good store lay by every plate. Then followed the soup, then a course of poundcakes, then poultry, then veal cutlets, and roast mutton. The only vegetables were potatoes and beans, for Courmayeur is too high above the sea to be able to afford much variety in the leguminous department. Nearly the whole of its supplies are brought from the lower parts of the valley. Here they had but just begun to mow the grass, and the barley was still green, while in other places I had seen the hay all carried and the wheat harvest half over.

Courmayeur is the Buxton or Malvern of Piedmont, having medicinal springs both hot and cold in the neigh-

bourhood. There is no lack of hotels, nor of guests during the hot season. At our table, however, there were not more than a dozen, all undergoing the hygienic process; but not the less talkative on that account. Some had large pale green bottles of the mineral water before them, which they mixed with their wine; but judging from the resigned look with which they drank the mixture, its flavour was not particularly agreeable. As we sat over our dessert of dried fruits, the conversation went on in French—that is, Piedmontese French; and a curious dialect it becomes with *ch* everywhere transformed into *s*, and *u* into *oo*. An elderly gentleman who sat by my side was an *habitué*, having visited the baths for ten successive years, and he expatiated with much satisfaction to himself on the delightful contrast between the fresh cool temperature of Courmayeur, and that of the low country. He knew all the gossip of the place, and took the opportunity of my being a new comer to play the Ancient Mariner's part, and held me, though not with "glittering eye," till his story was told. All at once he asked, "Don't you speak English?" and a great surprise it was to me to hear my own language in the midst of his *lingua Franca*, and I could not help saying so. He then told me with a laugh he had lived some years in New York, and on my replying that I remembered some one of his name in Broadway in that city—"That's my brother!" he exclaimed, starting up. "Come, let us go and drink a cup of coffee together."

The *café* to which we went is at the *Albergo del Angelo*, the chief hotel of the village: the courtyard was thronged with gaily dressed groups listening to a party of serenaders who sang Italian ditties to guitar

accompaniments. While we sipped our coffee, my garrulous friend pointed out the notable personages among the bystanders: those most talked about for the time being were three young Spanish ladies, sisters, all recently married to three young Frenchmen who were brothers. Judging from their looks, life had no cares for them, nor indeed for any of the crowd: all were as vivacious as people generally are after dinner.

The old gentleman proposed a stroll to the meadows, and as we sauntered along he said—"I dare say you think it strange that I want to talk to you so much. But the fact is, I like the English. There's no humbug about them; no bowing and scraping like what you see in this country, where a man thinks more of taking off his hat than of telling the truth." This from a native was rather severe towards his own countrymen. I hope it is not true. Then he fell to talking about the Austrians, and the late war, and the battle of Novara, which he saw from the top of his house in that city. "We lost it for the time," he said; "but it will have to be fought over again some day." With this remark the worthy Novarese, finding himself fatigued, wished me a pleasant journey for the morrow, shook hands, and betook himself once more to the *café*.

Remembering what had befallen me on the St. Bernard, and the *Père Clavandier's* earnest advice not to attempt the Col de Fours without a guide, because of the unusual quantity of snow still lying, I engaged a guide to go with me the next day to Nant Bourant, and arranged for an early start. Berthod, Laurent, as he called himself, following the practice of the country, which puts the surname first, promised to be ready at sunrise; and that

would be early enough. I then walked out to the spot from whence I had caught the first view of the needles in the morning. The last thin cloud was melting from the heights, and there, glorious against the dark blue sky, rose "Europe's stainless summit,"—Earth's loftiest altar, which man may stand at the foot of, and feel his littleness, and bow the head in reverent worship. An altar, too, for the incense of praise and thanksgiving, when he reflects that, little though he be, his spirit expands with the majesty of the scene, and soars with daring flight from pinnacle to pinnacle, to rest at last on the loftiest height in profound adoration.

CHAPTER XI.

Pleasant were many scenes, but most to me
The solitude of vast extent, untouched
By hand of art, where Naturé sowed herself,
And reaped her crops; whose garments were the clouds;
Whose minstrels brooks; whose lamps the moon and stars;
Whose organ-choir the voice of many waters;
Whose banquets morning dews; whose heroes storms;
Whose warriors mighty winds; whose lovers flowers;
Whose orators the thunderbolts of God;
Whose palaces the everlasting hills.—POLLOK.

THE next morning was as bright and clear as heart could wish. How delightful it is to feel fine weather in the first early peep from your chamber window! "You have a hard day's work before you," said Signor Bertolino, the landlord, as he met me at the foot of the stairs, "so don't fail to make a good breakfast." It was not his fault if I did not, for there were *côtelettes,* eggs, coffee, bread, toast, *grisane,* butter, and honey—all excellent, and worthy of the reputation of the *Hôtel de l'Union* and its obliging host. Do not fail to put up there when you go to Courmayeur. My guide was waiting when I went down to the court-yard; and daylight had not long begun "voyaging on before the sun" when we set off. The morning was cool

and crisp, making one's finger's tingle as with a touch of frost—a sign of settled weather. Deep shadows rested on the valley as we crossed the wooden bridge over the Doire at the village of La Saxe; and all was so calm and silent, that it seemed as though nature and man were both waiting for the sun to waken them into life. I left Courmayeur more reluctantly than any place I had yet seen, and would willingly have stayed a week to explore the hills and valleys that surround it. I could not help stopping on the bridge to look back on the peaceful scene. Soon the path turning suddenly to the left led us into the Val d'Entrèves at the very foot of Mont Blanc, and at once we were shut in by scenery stupendous in character and savagely sublime.

The rapid stream had been playing pranks, as mountain rivers are wont to do, and presently we were brought to a stand by a break in the path where the Doire had chosen to excavate for itself a hollow, in which it whirled round and round like a maëlstrom, as though anticipating the mills in the Courmayeur valley, and gathering strength to turn their wheels. After a short survey the guide dug a few foot-holes in the face of the steep cliff, by means of which we scrambled across and leaped down on the path beyond. In the next mile we met with half a dozen similar breaks, but none so formidable as the first, though the undermining of the path was so great in many places that it trembled, and threatened to fall as we walked over it.

A short distance farther, and you come in sight of what afar off looks like a huge, rough, railway embankment, stretching across the valley, apparently barring all passage. It is the glacier of La Brenva, and so decep-

tive are its proportions, that, near as it appears, there is yet a long walk before you can set foot on the confused mass of rocky *débris* that forms its *moraine*, or peep under the low arches which the fretful stream has worn for itself from one side of the mighty glacier to the other. All that I had ever read of glaciers seemed to go for nothing, so greatly did the reality surpass my expectations. You hardly know at first which is the more extraordinary, the *moraine* or the ice. The appearance of the former would lead you to believe that the giant spirits of the mountain had been shooting rubbish on that particular spot for ages, so wildly heaped are the blocks, slabs, and lumps of limestone and granite, or whatever else the ice may have met and pushed before it in its descent. If you have ever seen the refuse flung out from the slate quarries in Caernarvonshire, you may begin to form an idea of it. So closely is it jammed against the side of the valley, that there is no room for a footway at its base: the river, as before observed, has been compelled to force a passage underneath, and the path rising higher up the slope, winds through a pleasant wood of firs. When opposite the glacier, near the little chapel of Notre Dame de là Guérison, I stepped beyond the screen of trees, to get an unbroken view of the wondrous sight that stretched from beneath my feet far away to its source in the everlasting snows of the upper regions of the mountain. Half way up, a bare flat rock thrusts its dark surface to a level with the icy mass around, and all at once I saw what appeared to be a large snowball roll across the stony slope, and fall like a whiff of white dust from its lower edge. It seemed but a mere handful; there followed,

however, such a rumbling peal, as of distant thunder, startling the hill tops and frozen glens with oft-repeated echoes, that could only have been the work of an avalanche. Was it possible, I thought, that effects so great could be produced by a cause apparently so trifling? and I kept my eyes on the rock, when, as if to remove my doubt, another white lump broke loose and crumbled, as in the former instance, and again the air shook with thunderings. Then I knew that a mighty block of ice had broken loose from the glacier above the rock, and ground itself to powder by the crushing plunge. Many tons' weight must the lump have been, that, by its fall, awoke Echo in her hiding-places for miles around!

The firwoods rang with bell-music, for the cattle from the lower valleys were being driven up to their mountain pastures. This migration usually takes place at the end of June; but a late season having retarded the melting of snow on the heights had deferred it this year till the middle of July. The cows kept steadily onwards in single column along the steep slopes and stony paths, followed by a few mules laden with straw, dairy implements, and provisions for the herdsmen who drove them. On they go without stopping, the patient beasts making no mistake as to their own grazing ground, those bound for the highest pastures pausing not till they reach their destination. It was pleasant to hear the kling, klang, and tinkle-tinkle of the bells as the long train paced up and down, and in and out on the rough and uneven route.

Presently the valley widens, leaving room for a level floor of meadow a mile or more in length. The grass which had not yet been cut, grew so thick and tall

as almost to hide the narrow footway, along which we walked knee-deep in the luxuriant herbage. Tennyson's line—

You could not see the grass for flowers,

was here literally true; and there was an indescribable charm in beholding the lavish beauty with which Flora had established a colony in the heart of so wild a landscape, and you feel almost inclined to envy the cattle that eat the hay off such a meadow. Talking of hay, there is a tradition still remembered in the neighbourhood, that on the 15th of a sunshiny July in a year long, long ago, the inhabitants of a village would make hay instead of keeping the *fête*, and the next day they and their houses were all buried beneath the ice as a punishment for their sacrilegious conduct.

Every step brought us nearer to the Glacier de Miage, which is to La Brenva as Ben Nevis to the Wrekin. It comes down from among the Aiguilles Rouges, and with a breadth of a mile and a half stretches from three to four miles into the valley. What a tremendous gorge must that be through which it descends! The *moraine* is 400 feet high: a small mountain in itself. A straggling patch of fir-trees from twenty to thirty feet high grew on one part of it, which appears to have undergone but little disturbance for some years. We had to search here among the rocks for the bridge built of a few tree stems and brushwood, which is washed away every spring, and reconstructed in a different place. The *moraine* pushes the Doire with a bold sweep out of its direct course; and in some places leaves scarcely room for the struggling current. The path runs along its slope, and a most fatiguing one it

ks. Rising and falling, twisting and turning, among the masses of rock, and serving here and there as the channel for a tiny torrent that has forced its way through from the body of the glacier. We were three quarters of an hour in crossing it, from which some idea may be formed of the great breadth of the glacier. Huge lumps of rock hang on the slope above the path, and on the very summit of the *moraine;* and you involuntarily quicken your step while passing them, lest they should suddenly fall. Climb to the top, and look at the ice, tossed and tilted in a thousand wild forms, with yawning crevices between, where its veined structure may be seen, set off by exquisite tints of green and blue. As molten lava creeps down the sloping side of a volcano, so does the glacier descend an Alpine gorge; not a fixed, frozen mass, but ceaselessly urging its way downwards until it reaches the valley, where the warmer temperature sets a limit to its progress. Thus it is that the savage grandeur of the spectacle, and the simple law by which so resistless a mass is stayed, alike arouse a sense of wonder.

Professor J. D. Forbes, in his admirable work on the glaciers of the Alps, recommends the traveller to beware of the big rocks which seem to rest immovable on their icy pedestals, and of smooth, gravelly banks: the one may topple down, the other conceals the most dangerous ice. "All is on the eve of motion," he says. "Let him sit awhile, as I did, on the *moraine* of Miage, and watch the silent energy of the ice and the sun. No animal ever passes, but yet the stillness of death is not there; the ice is cracking and straining onwards; the gravel slides over the bed to which it was frozen during the night, but now lubricated by the effect of sunshine. The fine sand,

detached, loosens the gravel which it supported, the gravel the little fragments, and the little fragments the great; till, after some preliminary noise, the thunder of clashing rocks is heard, which settle into the bottom of some crevice, and all is again still."

Above Miage the valley takes the name of Allée Blanche; and white indeed were its upper slopes with fields of snow! We crossed the dam which keeps the Lake of Combal in due subordination; and soon after came to a turfy level, spongy and swampy from the thaw and the soft earthy deposit which the Doire distributes from side to side by repeated shiftings of channel. Full before us rose the Col de la Seigne, and rocky cliffs and pinnacles on either hand. A few minutes more, and we were on the snow. The first few beds lying on the level were passed with little difficulty; but the sudden chill struck to my feet made me shudder. Worse was to come, as I found, when the level began to rise into a slope. There feats of agility were not to be thought of; patient plodding is the only resource. With short steps, as though mounting a low-graded stair, you pace upwards, bringing your foot flat down, but with greater force on toe than heel. Keeping on in this way, though slowly, takes you over a good space of ground in the course of an hour; but to one unused to the exercise, keeping on is the difficulty. Sometimes you slip, and with the loss of foothold there is an immediate loss of breath, producing temporary exhaustion. Now any little lump of turf or stone peeping through the snow, becomes invested with a new character, and you plant your foot upon it, with a sense of relief only to be appreciated in such circumstances. Once, when comparing our slow

progress with the expanse of snow between us and the Col, a feeling of despondency came over me; to reach the top seemed hopeless. But at that moment we came to a turfy mound, dry and elastic, rising like an oasis in the waste of snow, and with a deep breath of intense satisfaction, I flung myself down on the warm soft grass. Half-a-score of marmots, disporting themselves in the sunshine, fled to their burrows at our approach, leaving us in uninterrupted possession. Flowers grew thickly on the mound. There was the Alpine rhododendron, whose

— scarlet tufts so cheerily
Look out upon the snow.

Violets too, and gentians, and campanulas dyed with the sky's own blue, white petalled anemones, crowned with a golden star, and here and there shone the velvety disc of an auricula—but who would make a catalogue with the summit of Mont Blanc to be seen, bright, sharp, and distinct, far aloft in the cerulean void? I lay on my back looking up at it in a species of fascination. A strong north wind was blowing the snow from the top in thin white streams, shadowy as the tail of a comet, and soon becoming invisible. On this side, the mountain is almost perpendicular: wall-like rises the royal peak from desolate wastes of snow, and these are buttressed by precipices which plunge sheer down literally thousands of feet to the valley below. Such a sight well repaid days of travel and hours of fatigue. Not a cloud flecked the sky, and the blue vault hanging overhead seemed vaster and bluer than ever before. That halt fills one of the pleasantest corners of my memory.

On we went again, leaving the Doire behind us at its

very source in the glacier of the Allée Blanche, from whence it starts, turbid with particles from the mountains, to be deposited ere long on the shallows which at some future day will become dry land in the distant Adriatic: one of the instances showing, as Emerson observes in a passage which I may be pardoned for introducing here, that "All things in nature are engaged in writing their own history. The planet and the pebble are attended by their shadows—the rolling rock leaves its furrows on the mountain side—the river its channel in the soil—the animal its bones in the stratum—the fern and leaf inscribe their modest epitaphs on the coal—the falling drop sculptures its story on the sand, or on the stone—not a footstep on the snow or on the ground but traces in characters more or less enduring the record of its progress."

Many were the little torrents rushing down from the heights that we had to leap over, or pass on stepping-stones, improvised from the lumps of rock that lay around. To my surprise I found myself taking leaps that I would have gone a mile to avoid under other circumstances; but wherever the guide went I followed without hesitation, and yet confident of success. Doubtless the unaccustomed exercise, the grand and novel scenery, and the pure air, which seems to add a new pleasure to mere physical existence, all combine to make timorous nerves strong for the occasion.

"Look, look," said Berthod, all on a sudden, "there's a chamois on the hill yonder!" I looked where he pointed, and saw a figure advance from a dark patch of rock to the broad field of snow that stretched unbroken to the summit of the ridge. A second followed, then a third, and then it became apparent that they were

not chamois, but men. The guide was puzzled to account for their presence, as he knew of no one but ourselves having left Courmayeur that morning. "At all events," he added, "they are too far to the right. We shall take an easier route. Courage, monsieur, another pull and we shall be at the top."

The snow was neither too hard nor too soft, but just in the condition to afford a good foothold, though not without sundry slips on my part. The glare from the white surface is distressingly dazzling, and I was fain more than once to hold my hands as screens before my eyes. Slow and steady was the pace, for there was risk of a slide down the slope, with the penalty of labouring up it again. In the midst of this trying exertion, Berthod took occasion to say, "Oh, monsieur, this is nothing to the Col de Fours!" The Col de Fours is a second and still higher pass, which we had to cross on the farther side of the next valley; but to tell me of it just then was not particularly encouraging. At length we stepped from the weary expanse of snow to a strip of turf close to the cairn which marks the culminating point of the Col de la Seigne. What pleasure to place the feet once more on firm ground! for the moment it took precedence of all other feelings.

We were standing on a ridge 8,422 feet above the sea-level, crossing the head of the Allée Blanche, from the great chain of Mont Blanc to that of which Mont Chetif forms part, and strictly speaking belonging to neither. The waters on one side of it find their way to the Rhone and the Gulf of Lyons, on the other, as already mentioned, to the Po and the Adriatic. Immediately below us lay the valley we had ascended, with its four

glaciers, its mighty cliffs, and mountains of bare rock, the crevices of which, filled with snow, shone like veins of silver; and Mont Blanc rising proudly above all. As far as the eye could see, there was nothing but hill-tops, so various in aspect, outline, and colour, as to make up a scene of marvellous grandeur; and yet conveying a sense of desolation somewhat grim though glorious. Turning round we saw the valley of Bonneval, a deep oval, shut in on the farther side by a rocky wall, which at the distance appeared perpendicular. "There," said the guide, pointing to a hollow filled with snow in the tremendous precipice, "that is the Col de Fours." In a direct line it was not far off, and I half wished there were a bridge across; but we had to descend and mount again.

We set off, and in five minutes slid down and over broad patches of snow that would have taken us half an hour to traverse in the contrary direction. In this way the wintry region was soon left behind, and then it was alternate rock and turf all the way to the chalets of Motet, seen long before they are reached. At length we arrived ready for rest and refreshment; five hours and a quarter having elapsed since our start from Courmayeur. The three men whom we had seen on the snow came in but a few minutes before us. They were two *maquignons* with a guide going over the mountain to buy mules. As we entered they rose from the beds on which they had stretched themselves, and fell to at a large tureen of soup, and a portion of a sheep to match; the former they speedily emptied, and of the latter they left nothing but the bones,—and then they called for sundry bottles of wine, which were more leisurely disposed of. They proposed that we should all continue our journey in company;

but they were still drinking when I departed, and I was not sorry to leave them behind.

Presently the hostess brought what she called my *côtelettes*, but which were lumps apparently chopped with an axe from a leg of mutton. The cookery was by no means praiseworthy; my appetite, however, was keen, and the tough cutlets soon disappeared, followed by a jug of hot wine with plenty of sugar in it, which I shared with Berthod, and he agreed with me that under such circumstances, it was particularly comforting. The repast over, I took my chair out on the grass, and sat down in the sunshine. If the valley of Bonneval looked deep from above, it appeared still deeper now, so little space is there between the enclosing hills. At its head the Aiguille du Glacier rises far aloft, crowned by a dazzling and unsullied cone of snow, from which descends a rugged glacier. So steep and tremendous are the mountain masses, that it is easy to imagine one's-self condemned to hopeless imprisonment at their base. The Col de Fours seemed to offer no practicable outlet, and for a few moments I almost doubted the possibility of a passage. But the day was too bright and the breeze too brisk for other than the most hopeful anticipations.

The chalets are strongly built, but with too many crevices for the passage of the wind, and are not over clean. Those who pass the night under their roof complain of the unwelcome presence of fleas. Even here you find competition, for the *Ancien Hôtel du Chalet des Mottets chez Miedan Gros* has a rival next door in *Au Repos des Voyageurs chez Villien.* Judging from appearances, there is not much to choose between them.

After resting two hours, I summoned my guide and

started for the second half of our journey. We descended the valley towards Chapiu for about a mile, then striking off to the right, began immediately to climb. The ascent was less formidable than I had anticipated, though there were a few rather teasing leaps across the chasms of waterfalls, which we took to avoid the *détours* of the mule track.

Sometimes we came to a steep that seemed insurmountable, or such as would tax one's climbing abilities to the utmost; but with a traverse here and a slant there, my guide showed me how to elude ridgy places, which had I been alone, would have cost me much panting exertion in direct ascent. If fine weather could be insured, a tourist with an ordinary amount of self-reliance might very well undertake this day's journey by himself; but when the difficulties of the ground are considered, the remoteness of human habitation and the chance of storm, discretion would advise the company of a guide.

Not till we reached the last slope did we find snow, and there it lay from top to bottom in a continuous bed—three or four feet thick in some places. Close to its lower edge rose a low ridge of turf, green and dry, too tempting to pass without sitting down, especially with such a prospect outstretched before it. While basking in the sun at so high an elevation, you can feel, even without an instrument to detect it, how great is the energy of the light. Your whole being, spiritual as well as corporeal, seems to be invigorated by its influence; while the embrowned tinge of your hands and face will show traces of its action, when the far-away mountains are seen but with the mental eye. After a grateful rest, I looked at my watch to time our passage of the snow. It was too steep for a direct ascent, so we tacked from side to side across it—trudge, trudge,

with a patient tread; and here, too, owing to my morning's experience, I found less of difficulty. Still the task was toilsome, almost beyond belief, and right glad was I when, after forty minutes' of steady ascent, we reached the top—an elevation of 9,045 feet. There was the whole of the view we had seen from the Col de la Seigne, the Mont Blanc range, from the Jorasses to the Aiguille du Glacier, and in the opposite direction, another over the Tarentaise and away to Mont Cenis, and farther till earth and sky merged in hazy blue.

Finer weather could not be desired. There was not a breath of those chilling blasts, so much to be dreaded after a mountain climb, for a candle flame would scarcely have flickered in the soft breeze. Winter, wearied with watching had dropped asleep, and Summer, creeping timidly into his realm, was breathing gently in the surly one's face. There was nothing to mar enjoyment; and half an hour flew swiftly in the contemplation of so magnificent a panorama, and I would still have lingered, had not Berthod warned me there was still some hard work before us. Hard, indeed, it promised to be, for the summit of the pass is formed of the uptilted ends of limestone strata, which in every conceivable form of ruggedness, stretch before the eye. The quantity of snow was much greater than on the Bonneval side; all the hollows and crevices were filled with the white drift, in strange contrast with the black rocks that reared their jagged heads in alternate ridges. A stranger caught by a *tourmente*, in such a place, could escape with life only by a miracle. This western shoulder of Mont Blanc, is indeed, held in wholesome dread by the guides, who, if they could choose, would seldom cross it in bad weather. No sign of footsteps was visible, for but

a single party had as yet passed the Col de Fours this season, and their trail was hidden by a slight snow that had since fallen.

We were descending, half slide half run, when we both sank suddenly up to our waists in the snow, and had some difficulty to scramble out again. "*Traitre de neige!*" exclaimed the guide as he sought a safer path. Presently we saw the cross of the Col du Bonhomme, and from thence it was a continuous succession of rocky ridges and hollows filled with soft snow, most fatiguing and dangerous to traverse all the way down to the Plan des Dames: never before had snow been seen so low in July. There is the heap said to mark the spot where a lady perished, to which all passers-by are expected to add a stone. As we flung our contributions, I asked Berthod whether it was permitted to throw more than one stone. "I don't know," he answered; "but if not, what thousands have passed this way!" From hence, the descent though stony and rough, was free from snow. How welcome was the sight of trees and turf, and pastures with cattle grazing. Then we came to a torrent, swollen by the melting snow, with stepping-stones wide apart, and covered by the water. I knew beforehand that for me to leap would be to fall, so I threw my boots across and waded through, but scarcely able to keep my footing, owing to the violence of the stream. Then down again to a lower level, and through a straggling forest of pines, and at last we came to the rude little inn at Nant Bourant, and made it our resting place. To come from Courmayeur had taken us twelve hours and a half, five of which were passed on the snow.

We had not long been housed, before rain fell in torrents, and continued during greater part of the night. We

had been highly favoured with weather. My guide asked me to write a testimonial in his book, and I very willingly testified that Laurent Berthod was a good travelling companion, not given to talk too much, and paid him his fee. In this there was a little difficulty, as I had no other silver coin than three five franc pieces and a single franc, and neither the guide nor the innkeeper could muster change. I had to pay the former twelve francs, six for coming, six for returning; I therefore gave him two of the larger coins and the odd franc, making eleven, and promised to leave the other in the hands of the hostess when paying her bill in the morning, so that he could reclaim it at his next visit. He was perfectly content with this arrangement, and on my asking him whether foreigners had been consulted when the custom of back fees was established, he replied in the negative, and was candid enough to add, that had such been the case, tourists would not have been called on to pay for the return journey. He intended to start at five the next morning; so, as our twelve hours' walk made me glad to retire early, I shook hands with him before going to bed, and he gave the finishing touch to his civilities, by praising the English above all other travellers. My window looked out on the Glacier de Trelatête, which plunged with a cold, dismal glare between the dark pine woods that sounded hoarsely as the wind swept through, whirling dense mists up from the valley below. So wild and gloomy an evening, closed with impressive solemnity, the contrasts of this eventful day.

CHAPTER XII.

Who would grub out his life in the same croft, when he has free-warren of all fields between this and the Rhine?—KINGSLEY.

Since gold is now the fountain whence all things flow, I will care for it, as I would for a pass, to travel the world by, without begging. FELTHAM.

HEAVILY fell the rain all night, but the morning brought fine weather again. While dressing, I called to mine host who was busy splitting wood some distance off, to tell him I could not shave without a glass. "*Voilà, monsieur!*" he replied directly afterwards, running with the *miroir* of the establishment in his hands; a large, heavy, black-framed thing, more than two feet square, and not easy to lift. I did not ask him how he managed when he had twenty guests instead of one, but he must be a clever tactician if there is no outbreak of impatience. The house is a large-sized chalet of two apartments, low and smoky, with a wooden shed running off at right angles partitioned into bed-rooms, in one of which I slept. The charge for my night's lodging and entertainment was four francs, much dearer in proportion than at Courmayeur; my last silver coin, however, sufficed to pay it, and leave the franc as agreed with Berthod: and then,

finding it still impossible to get change, I was compelled to forego my cup of coffee, and departed for Contamines by a steep, stony, tiresome road, through a pine forest. The Bonnant tumbles over a cliff, and forms a roaring, fathomless cataract, from the foot of which it flows onwards in a succession of brawling rapids. Some distance down, in a small, grassy opening, stands a little chapel dedicated to *Notre Dame de la Gorge*, perhaps for the use of those who "see no divinity in grass" or in grand scenery. Just before I reached it, a man with a basket slung at his back came running after me. "Monsieur," he cried, "I am going to Contamines also, and will bear you company, if you like." A companion was rather against my wishes at the moment; but as I did not object, he walked with me. Presently we met two gentlemen, each with an Alpenstock, and dressed more for a drawing-room than for the mountains, and attended by two guides, one of whom carried an axe, a pick, and a spade. They hoped to cross the Bonhomme, and the implements were to be used to cut footsteps in the snow, which I had passed the day before with only my umbrella for a walking-stick. Either the guides were mistaken as to the condition of the snow, or else they wished to make their couple of tourists pay for the removal of imaginary difficulties. I could not help thinking that the gentlemen would be glad to release their feet from trowser-straps, and their necks from stiff collars and broad ties, before they had climbed far on the rocks above the Plan des Dames.

Just as we came in sight of Contamines, my companion, pointing to a cottage on the right, told me it was his residence; then, touching his hat, he added, "Now,

monsieur, won't you give me something for having shown you the way?" Uncommonly cool, I thought, and told him so; moreover, that he had accompanied me for his own pleasure, not for mine; that where there was only one road there could be no losing the way; and that he who had house and land ought to be ashamed of such disgraceful mendicancy. He muttered something about liking tobacco, and turned away; and here was another instance of "trying it on," so much practised within the shadow of the Alps.

After the rough quarters of the last forty-eight hours, the new hotel at Contamines looked all that a traveller could desire. The hostess, though with a touch of snappishness in her manner, was clean and hospitable, and prepared my breakfast with praiseworthy alacrity. At one side of the open space in front of the house stood the church, a handsome edifice, with glittering tin spire, as most of the churches have throughout the province of Faucigny; at the other side were the public buildings of the village, and the ground between was the market-place. A numerous crowd had already assembled; and men, women, and children, all dressed in their best, arriving every moment, added to the number, and increased the hum of voices. Butter, eggs, fruit, scythes, rakes, and sickles, were exposed for sale, and a busy chaffering went on, while the chime of the church-bell pealed afar over the valley. It was again the sabbath, which for a great part of Europe means market-day as well as mass-day. The people come, and buy and sell, and make bargains, and tell and hear the news from all the country round, and at ten o'clock they adjourn to the church, hear mass, and when the service is over finish

their marketing. A mixture of devotion and business which economises time, though it may not edify.

Here, by getting change for a sovereign on paying for my breakfast, I was enabled to re-establish my commercial relations with society. The hostess counted sundry five-franc pieces into my hand, and a few smaller Piedmontese coins that looked like thin bad halfpence and farthings, and followed me to the door with, "*Bon voyage, monsieur!*" I had scarcely passed the market-place when a man broke through the throng, came up to me, and, touching his hat, said, "Have you thought of me, monsieur? Won't you give me something now?" At first I did not recognise him, but presently perceived that it was he who had thrust his company on me two or three hours previously, but now dressed in his best clothes. "Yes," I answered, raising my voice, so that the bystanders might hear; "I have thought of you, and I'll give you a piece of advice. Be a man, if you can; and leave off begging." May he profit thereby.

On the day I left Martigny and got a glimpse of the Col de Balme, I passed one extremity of the chain of Mont Blanc, which looks down into the valley of the Rhone; now I was doubling the other, which looks towards the fertile plains of Lombardy, Remembering that this chain, comprising the highest land in Europe, is thirty miles in length, and from fifteen to twenty in breadth, stretching over half a degree of the earth's surface and into a southern land, some idea may be formed of the variety of scenery met with in a walk round the roots of so vast a range of hills. The Val Mont Joie, which stretches from Contamines down to St. Gervais, is not the least beautiful: you are still shut in by mountains,

some all rock and wood, others bare and precipitous, with snow-peaks peeping over from behind, and the ridgy masses of two or three glaciers sloping down the craggy hollows; and all contrasted by smiling cultivation and fruitful fields below. In places where the streams cross the road you see abundant proofs of the ravages they commit when swollen by storms: in such spots the route is always being mended. I saw a small meadow covered three feet deep with gravel and large stones, by a rill that would scarcely have filled a four-inch pipe: the mischief was but a few days old. Geologists tell us that the old earth is everywhere undergoing a change; but it is only in mountain lands, as on seacoasts, that one sees demonstrably what the change really is.

Here and there, by the roadside, are erections which at a distance resemble stone sentry-boxes. Before one of these a group of country people was collected, the men with their hats off, and all in a reverent attitude, which they retained for a minute or two, and then making the sign of the cross, went on their way. On coming up I found it was an oratory, in front of which they had been praying. There were two small doll-like images in the recess, which looked very much like a safe, being protected by a wire door. Above the figures was an engraved plate, with this inscription much defaced:—*Ste Anne, mère de la Ste Vièrge, patronne de cet oratoire;* and under the cornice on the front:—*J. H. S. Monseigneur Louis Rendu accorde* 40 *jours d'indulgences à quiconque récitera un Pater et un Ave devant cet oratoire.* The outside of this little structure was scribbled all over with caricatures, and expressions of incredulity among them, *O! le grand sinistre!* a little farther stood

another similarly defaced. In this was the Virgin and infant Jesus, and on the top an invocation—

Quand la mort fermera nos yeux,
Accordez nous, reine des cieux,
Le séjour des bienheureux.

Close by was a newly-built chapel, bearing on its pediment another of the bishop's advertisements:—*Mgr. Rendu, qui m'a bénite le* 29 *Juin*, 1851, *accorde* 40 *jours d'indulgences aux fidèles qui diront, en passant devant moi, Saints clairs, Antoine, et Martin, priez pour nous.* These things, which are scarcely noticed by those who rattle along the road in a *char*, give the pedestrian something to think about more or less important, according to his own personal convictions. To me it seemed that indulgences were not at all dear.

I had come to Bionnay, an hour and a quarter from Contamines, when it suddenly occurred to me that only twenty francs had been reckoned in exchange for my sovereign. Had I been too inattentive, or the hostess too knowing? In either case a five-franc piece was more than I cared to lose in such a way; so, leaving my knapsack at the tavern of the village, I retraced my steps—no pleasant task at any time, especially when up-hill. Madame stared on seeing me return, said she had taken my sovereign for a Napoleon, but being convinced of her mistake, at once made made up the deficit. It was past noon when I got back to Bionnay, and my plans for the day were somewhat interfered with by the delay; however, it would be still possible to get to Chamonix before sunset. I dined off goat's-milk cheese, bread, and wine, in a room that had pine walls, pine ceiling, pine floor, pine

tables and forms, and a clock in a lanky pine case, and all as thickly covered with fly-stains as scouring-paper with sand. The inmates who made up in civility what they lacked in cleanliness, are doubtless as ignorant of the natural colour of the wood as Mrs. M'Clarty was of the transparency of her windows.

From this village a path leads up to the Col de Voza, a height at the lower end of the Chamonix valley, which shortens the distance by some two or three hours. This I began to climb, but feeling lazy from having walked three times over the same ground, I asked a boy, who was resting under a tree, if he would like to earn ten sous by carrying my knapsack to the pavilion at the top of the pass. "That I will!" he cried, starting up, and taking the burden on his shoulders, with "*Allons!*" he stepped out at a pace that it was not easy to keep up with. I like at times to have a boy for a companion; there is so much of candour in him, so much of presumption, conscious or unconscious, so much vivacity and lack of experience, as to give a charm to all he says, and altogether different from the flavour of full-grown opinions. Mine was an intelligent little fellow, and chatted at as lively a rate as he walked. He had been to mass at St. Gervais, and was going home to Bionnassay, a village higher up the mountain, through which we passed; it stands opposite to the glacier of the same name, on the opposite side of the valley. This glacier, more than any other that I had seen, proved how winter and summer could exist side by side, for it streamed down between the pine trees, and into the fields, a frozen promontory, with corn growing on each side of it.

The Col de Voza crosses the Mont Lacha chain, at a

height of nearly 7,000 feet. In due time we reached the pavilion, as the chalet is called, built on the soft green pastures that crown the pass. It commands a view along the whole valley of Chamonix, and up to the Col de Balme, where stands a similar edifice. There was the Arve, looking like a pale brown ribbon twisting along the bottom, and there were the jutting extremities of other glaciers, and Mont Blanc, with its troop of rocky needles rising proudly above all. With the eye my tour of the mountain was now complete. It is a striking view, but I greatly prefer that seen from Courmayeur.

While I drank a cup of coffee, the boy went down to the basement to get a treat of milk for two sous, which I gave him beyond the stipulated snm. When he came up again his gaiety was gone, he looked discontented, and on my asking the cause, he replied that he had been thinking he ought to be paid for going back again; the notion had been put into his head by the woman who sold him the milk. To my "Why?" he could only answer "Because" — perhaps from inexperience in the way of circumventing travellers; and presently he changed his cue, and begged to carry the knapsack down to the foot of the hill on the Chamonix side: if I would give him the same as for coming up he would be well content. I agreed, and off we went the shortest way, striding and sliding down the steep green slopes, till we came to the mule track. This, owing to the trampling of hoofs and saturation of the ground by springs, was a deep tenacious mud, difficult to walk on, and very wearying. Had I started from this point, as most people do, such a path would have made me go back in despair; it was worse than snow, or rock, or sand,

The boy trotted nimbly on in advance, and when about half way down, was stopped by a woman coming up, who with exclamations of surprise, put her arms round his neck, and kissed him. As I came near, she announced herself as his mother, and expressed her pleasure that so good a son had met with the good fortune of carrying a knapsack. "He is the best of boys!" she added, and then laying her hand on my arm, to detain me, she asked, in a low tone, "Monsieur, have you ever heard of Westphalia and King Jerome?" A strange question, I thought, as I replied in the affirmative, wondering what would follow. "Well, then, monsieur, I was born in Westphalia, and King Jerome had me in his arms when I was four years old." In what manifold forms vanity oozes out! We should have had more of the flattering recollections, but the boy, with an impatient "*Allons*," hurried down the hill, and the good dame had to save her confidences for another ear. I was heartily glad to get off the slimy path, where it emerged on the road at Les Ouches, and to feel hard ground under my feet. Here I shifted the knapsack from the boy's shoulders to my own, and gave him the bad halfpence and farthings which had been given to me at Contamines, and made up the exact sum he had to receive. He put them into his pocket, saying, "*Merci*, monsieur, I am well content with my day's work." Not a doubt of it, for he had earned a whole week's wages in four hours We shook hands; he turned and trudged briskly up the hill, and I to Chamonix.

A number of the men of Les Ouches were playing at bowls on the green by the side of the church, with all the rest of the village sitting at their doors as spectators, making a holiday of Sunday evening. A few started up

to beg as I passed; and all along the road you are beset by professional beggars. Children come whining at your side with a bunch of wildflowers, or a few cherries; women meet you with a pitcher of milk and two tumblers on a tray, or knitted nightcaps in their hand; now a hurdygurdy vexes your ears, and the grinder your temper; looking ahead you see a man apparently leaning against a pitchfork; you come up and find that the pitchfork is an Alpine horn—a long hollow pole cornuted—into which he blows till almost black in the face, and then hopes you will fee him for waking the echoes. If the echoes had an ear for music, they would never consent to wake at such a dismal summons. And so it is through the Alpine land,—the littleness of the men and the greatness of the mountains.

Less than two hours from Les Ouches brought me to Chamonix. I housed myself at the *Hôtel de Londres*, and saw at once on entering my bedroom, in the full-grown dimensions of the bason and ewer, that English habits were understood. At all my former sleeping-places, I had got over the difficulty of want of water, by ordering a cold footbath, which gave me an ample supply for my ablutions. While taking my tea, I heard a party arranging to ascend to the Grand Mulets the next morning, with a troop of guides, who were going to carry up planks for the building of a house at the foot of those well-known rocks. I might have joined them, but the Col de Fours had given me enough of mountain climbing.

How beautiful was the view of the great snowy mountain, and the dark forms of the *Aiguilles*, rising above the shadowy pine woods, in the moonlight of that calm summer evening!

CHAPTER XIII.

Ye icefalls! ye, that from the mountain's brow,
Adown enormous ravines, slope amain—
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,
And stopped; at once, amid their maddest plunge.

COLERIDGE.

Each morning sees some task begin,
Each evening sees it close;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

LONGFELLOW.

THE horn of the goatherd summoning his flock all through the village woke me at daybreak the next morning. I looked out at my window as the nimble creatures trotted past, jingling the bells hung from their necks so merrily as to make one fancy they enjoyed the music. There was an anticipation of short, sweet, dewy grass, in the tones of their bleatings,—sedate and confident on the part of the reverend old graybeards; impatient and somewhat doubtful among the younger sort; and from youth to age, there was a complete study of goatish nature. I lay down again to reflect at leisure over the moral that suggested itself, for, intending to have a quiet day at Chamonix, to rise at six would be early enough.

The *Hôtel de Londres* is almost exclusively frequented

by English, which, for those who wish to see foreign manners, is no advantage. As a rule, I prefer not to mix with my countrymen when abroad, one sees enough of them at home; but sundry reasons, which need not be recorded here, induced me to depart from it on this occasion. Had there been nothing else, the real, capacious handbasin,—the only one I saw in all my journey,—would have satisfactorily denoted the company I had fallen among —people who enjoy a wash with plenty of water. It is something to have a reputation for cleanliness. Then, again, you can call for a cup of tea with a comfortable assurance that the infusion will be as good as that you get in England; a rare result in foreign hotels generally.

I first walked out to look at the source of the Arveiron. You go for a mile or so along the road leading to the Col de Balme, then striking off to the right, across the bridge, some twenty minutes more bring you to the foot of the Glacier des Bois, as the termination of the Mer de Glace is called. You soon come upon the *moraine*, which, though smaller than those in the Allée Blanche, is a formidable-looking object. You may climb and stride from one huge lump of stone to another to the edge of the ice, or creep in and out of the narrow passages between the blocks, till the ominous sounds of straining and crushing that come from the mighty mass, and the deep gloom, startle you into a hasty retreat. The Arveiron rushes from three low arches at the foot of a dark blue cliff of ice, turbid and foaming; and as the eye peers into those darksome vaults, imagination begins to picture the terrific aspect of the interior. I crept as near as the stream would permit, and leaned over a stone to gaze and listen. It is an impressive scene. The water rushes swiftly

and noisily forth in abundant stream from its source deep in the heart of the glacier. At times its volume is largely increased, perhaps from the sudden breaking up of water-filled hollows inside the ice, and pouring furiously along, it does more mischief in a few minutes than can be repaired in as many months. Such an outburst had occurred only three days before my arrival, and the effects were still visible in the ruins of two wooden foot-bridges, the naked, stony patches along the banks, and the heaps of rubbish accumulated here and there round rocky projections in the bed of the Arve.

At the beginning of 1815 the arches of the glacier fell in, and the fragments becoming frozen together, stopped the flow of the river. The waters thus dammed up inside accumulated rapidly, until, at a point seven hundred feet above the former vent, they burst through in a tremendous cataract, tumbling headlong down the glacier, and sweeping all before it. So great were the accumulation and the pressure, that for months afterwards large masses of ice were borne off and carried down into the valley. If the action of one glacier produced such consequences, what must be that of the whole four hundred glaciers, large and small, known to exist in various parts of Switzerland and the Alps? The combined action of all these on climate, as well as on the earth's surface, though not in all cases observable, is not the least important in Nature's gigantic scheme of operations. Taking these glaciers at from three to twelve miles long, one to four miles wide, and one hundred to six hundred feet thick, an estimate has been made that about thirty million cubic fathoms of ice are slowly translated down the mountain ravines every year.

Lumps of stone, large and small, were continually falling, now plunging into the stream, now clattering into the hollows of the *moraine*, showing, were there no other proof, how ceaseless is the descending movement of the glacier. For some distance on each side the torrent, the mask of *débris* is washed completely away, and the structure of the ice is distinctly visible. You see veins and fissures running in every direction through the layers of which the glacier is formed, and which show themselves at the side as alternate dark and light bands. In some places these bands are bent double, or tilted forwards, thrust this way and that way, by the overwhelming pressure. In other places great pieces as big as a sentry-box, are squeezed up perpendicularly from the surface. Here may be seen all the tints of the ice, well defined, from blue to green, and from green to the dead dull white which predominates. The blue and bluish-green tints are exquisitely beautiful.

The morning was hot and sultry; but it is one of the effects of a glacier to produce a cold descending current of air, so after satisfying my curiosity by a near view I withdrew to a short distance and sat down on a block of stone, where the warmth of the sun made the cold wind a pleasant breeze. It is delightful to be able thus to choose a temperature. How striking the contrasts in the view! A cataract of ice, barred apparently by a dam of rocks, a torrent rushing from beneath, a waterfall tumbling with clouds of spray from above. Within a few inches of the frozen mass grows soft green turf, and fir-trees border it till lost behind the bend towards Montanvert. Winter frowning in the face of Summer, to resent her late intrusion into his territory, yet held in check by

her glowing breath. Far in the distance, looking up the mountain, are the tall *Aiguilles*, their red pinnacles shooting boldly up against the expanse of snow beyond, as though to prop the loftier heights. Truly a few hours may be well spent about the source of the Arveiron.

Scientific observers tells us that the ice is not destitute of animal life, for they have found what they call the "glacier flea." This creature is black and hairy, and about the size of that other species inconveniently known in some human habitations. It leaps, too, with the same facility. Monsieur Desor, a well-known naturalist, who first found these nimble insects, was not believed when he reported his discovery. "Judge, then," he writes, "what was my pleasure when I saw them again! Not that they are pretty, for they are very ugly, but because it gave me an opportunity of convincing Agassiz that these animals really lived in the glacier, and were not thrown there by chance. On turning over some stones, we found an incredible number, sometimes thousands within the space of a foot, and carried away many specimens to be examined with the microscope. We afterwards met with them all over the glacier; but they seem to prefer the shelter of stones, and the edges of pools and crevices. But what surprised us most was, to see these little animals introduce themselves with extraordinary agility into the most apparently compact ice, to such an extent that whenever we broke off a fragment, we saw them circulating like globules of blood through their canals. This is a fact which deserves to be taken into consideration, as it confirms the truth demonstrated by Agassiz, that glacier-ice, whatever may be its compactness and transparence, is always traversed by a *plexus* of

minute fissures which escape an ordinary eye, and furnishes besides a manifest proof that glaciers are by no means incompatible with the development of organic life, either on their surface or in their interior." The humorous Töpffer observes on this curious fact in natural history: "As for the fleas, they are about the same size as our own, and velveted, apparently to keep them warm. But what in the name of mischief do they find to bite on the glaciers —those mighty lymphatics? And is it not, after all, a melancholy fate for fleas to have to bite something which feels nothing at all of their sting?"

At my first approach to the "source" two girls came up with proffers of service, and annoyed me by their importunities. Finding at last that I wanted no guidance, one went and plucked a handful of flowers, the other knocked off a few lumps of ice, and both returned to offer me what they had collected. In vain did I entreat them to leave me to myself; they were not to be persuaded; and when ice and flowers failed to effect their purpose, they renewed the charge with bits of crystal and fir-branches. In the end, however, they abandoned the mode indirect for the mode direct, and begged me to give them something. They were strapping hearty lasses, who had left off their work of milking and carrying wood, to try their mendicities upon me. Pointing to the cows, the half-filled pail, and the bundle of wood on the other side of the stream, I replied, "Yes. I give you permission to go away; and the sooner the better." Perhaps this was not what they wanted; but at all events they went back to their work, and left me unmolested. All round Chamonix you are exposed to similar annoyance.

On returning to the hotel, I found some of the inmates

peeping through telescopes towards the summit of Mont Blanc. I peeped also, and saw a little troop moving single file across the snow close to the Grands Mulets. At the distance they looked scarcely larger than moles; but they were the party of guides who had started, some the night before, some at daybreak, to carry planks for the building of the shanty among the celebrated rocks. Each man carried a plank, and as the weather promised to be fine, the ascents were to be repeated daily, until all the materials should be carried up. Two Englishmen went with them for the sake of the adventure, and any one who pleased might have joined the party arranged for the morrow. I would have gone had not the last two or three days fully satisfied me with climbing and views of mountain scenery. The Grands Mulets are at an elevation of 9,996 feet, higher than the Col de Fours, but not commanding so extensive or grand a view. The shanty, planned to hold forty persons, has been since then finished and occupied; so that now the excitement and novelty of a bivouac on the rocks will no longer repay the adventurous traveller, and perhaps the ascent of Mont Blanc will become in time a rather prosy affair of short stages and comfortable houses of call.

When the gazers saw that the party had arrived, the fact was made known to all Chamonix, by the firing of cannon, and a burst of satisfaction rose from the throng of guides who are always lounging about the streets in idle expectancy. These stalwart professionals did not appear to me to deserve all the enthusiastic encomiums lavished upon them, and it is certain that to the weaknesses and indolence of visitors they owe the greater part of their employment. To see a strapping six-feet fellow

showing a couple the way to the "source," which is as easy to find as Trafalgar Square from Temple Bar, and carrying a lady's parasol and "ugly," strikes you as being a misapplication of muscle and sinew. Some few years ago, having found my way to the top of Snowdon, I had a talk with the man who, during fine weather, lives in the house on the summit, about the little difficulty of finding the path without a guide, he replied:—

"We know all that, but it is not our business to tell people so, and if they were not a little silly, we should not be able to live." Perhaps some of the fraternity at Chamonix would echo the sentiment. Whether or no, there was much about them and their little town that reminded me of Little Pedlington.

Mons. Tairraz provides a comfortable velvet-covered settee, for the solacement of those who wish to dip into *Galignani*, or to turn over the leaves of the Visitors' Book. I looked at a few pages of the latter without finding more than one attempt at fun. Against an entry, *Block, de Paris*, some one had written, "Is the family name *Head?*" Another had appended to his autograph a recommendation of the bottled beer to be had at a stopping place on the way to the Montanvert. Some few had given themselves titles of dignity and honour, perhaps without any title to do so, beyond that which is to be picked up at Vanity Fair.

All day long a couple of hewers were busy in the street by the side of the hotel, squaring long pine logs with their axes, and encumbering the carriage-way with chips. These logs were to serve as beams in the new wing which the worthy host is building between his present house and the river. By the summer of 1854 it will be finished,

and then, as he told me, there will be space for sixty additional beds, besides bath-rooms, and other arrangements for the convenience of guests. The whole place resounded with the noise of masons and carpenters, who, though they did not work very expeditiously, yet worked very solidly; and some of the so-called "builders," who "run up" houses in the outskirts of London, might profit by a study of Chamonix architecture.

I passed the time between breakfast and dinner on the hill-side that slopes down from the Montanvert; sometimes climbing high enough to overlook the whole valley, at others sauntering in the woods beneath, where in wild plenty grow barberries and strawberries, or lying on the grass by the side of "the cascade." In the afternoon, thick clouds settled down on the mountain peaks, and a few sudden thunder-showers fell pattering on the leaves, beneath which I found a friendly shelter.

If thou wouldst read a lesson, that will keep
Thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep,
Go to the woods and hills.

Thinking over some remarks I had heard at the breakfast table, I concluded that those who "read up" before taking a tour on the continent, would do well to eschew high-wrought sentimentality. Sundry guide books recommend a heavy charge of this spiritual ammunition which is to be fired off at word of command on arrival at certain points of view. Far wiser is it to reject all sentiment but your own, and let that be derived from your own impressions. These are apt to be affected by circumstances. Perhaps on coming to a place where you expect to feel all enthusiasm and admiration, you will feel nothing but

weariness, perchance footsore, or there may be a mist. No matter—some day when you are resting in a hollow of the rocks, or under the trees, some trailing plant, or frondent fern, or gushing spring, will catch your eye, and awaken your feelings for that keen sense of delight which you hoped for when gazing from a mountain.

There was a numerous company at the five o'clock dinner. Some had only just arrived, others who had stayed two or three days were about to depart, some thought the place delightful, others tiresome. A party of four, two of either sex, did not know whether they had a Foreign-office passport or not, they left such matters to their courier. Some had been up to the famous "Jardin," and instead of green turf, found it yet filled with unmelted snow; others had been "doing" the Flegère and the Col de Balme. A youthful gentleman who sat at my side, pulled a handful of stones from his pocket, and told me he had picked them up at the foot of the "egg-wheels," and he talked so much about the "egg-wheels," as to puzzle me for a time as to what he meant. At last I comprehended that he had been paying a visit to the *Aiguilles*, near the *Mer de Glass*, as he called it, and these stones were to be carried home as souvenirs. I cannot help being amused at the queer French which some of our countrymen and countrywomen speak when they go a-travelling; and no doubt my own endeavours in that way have given amusement to others.

As evening drew on, the leaden clouds sank lower and lower till the valley seemed but a shallow sombre chasm, shut out from all the rest of earth. The wind blew damp and chill, making overcoats acceptable, and the noise of falling waters fell louder on the ear. The waiter had

offered to book me a place to Geneva for sixteen francs: I went to the office myself and paid but fourteen; and then took a stroll up the side of the Brevent to look at the valley under its changed aspect. Chamonix and Courmayeur, though three days apart by the ordinary route, are but thirteen miles distant directly through the mountain, yet there is a considerable difference between the two. I greatly prefer Courmayeur, and were I going to pass a week or two at the foot of Mont Blanc, should make it my head-quarters. There the scenery is altogether grander and more varied, and the choice of routes in other directions is more numerous. Besides which, there are the mineral waters for those who wish to drink or bathe.

At nightfall, little groups of visitors, some from other hotels, gathered in the courtyard, talking over their experiences and projects. Among them was a considerable sprinkling of Americans, who had come across the Atlantic to see Europe. One of them gave a very discouraging account of his visit to Rome, where much of his enjoyment had been marred by the tormenting attacks of swarms of fleas, which it appears abound in the Holy City. England he said was the only country where he had not met with annoyances. He had seen Oxford, Cambridge, the lakes, the highlands, and brought away none but delightful recollections. Happy the traveller who can give such unqualified praise!

My bill the next morning contained the "regular" charge for bougies—one franc for two nights. On all occasions when this item had appeared in my bill I refused to pay it, and carried my point. Putting my finger on the obnoxious charge, I told the waiter he must

deduct it before I would pay. He answered with a long string of "*Mais, Monsieurs*," and asked my reasons. "First," I replied, "it is a shabby charge; second, you are bound to furnish a light, if it be dark when I go to bed in your house; third, your bougies are only tallow; and fourth, I will not pay it." The reasons, he said, were excellent: "*Mais*—"

"You will have to deduct," I interrupted; and so he did, for he carried the bill away and brought it back with the franc in dispute subtracted from the sum total.

Innkeepers in Switzerland, as well as other countries, know that the charge for bedroom light is indefensible; but they "try it on," and as most of their guests will not take the trouble to resist the extortion, they find a profit in the shabby practice. And that reconciles many folk as well as innkeepers to proceedings which morality refuses to sanction.

CHAPTER XIV.

Good land, I confess, affords a pleasant prospect: but, by your good leave, sir, large measure of foul way is not altogether so acceptable.—COTTON.

Lake Leman woos me with its crystal face.—BYRON.

I like not their little plates; methinks there's vertue in an English sur-loyn.—THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES.

THE road from Chamonix to Sallenches is said to be a *route provinciale*, which is, or ought to be, to the *route communale* what the great county highways of England are to the parish cross-roads. It runs, however, through so rough a country that smooth travelling is impossible. But that a practicable carriage-road exists at all in such a wild region, would reconcile the visitor to a few hours of severe jolting.

The morning presented a striking contrast to that of the day previous. The dark, heavy clouds had sunk lower on the mountain sides during the night, giving to the valley the appearance of a long, gloomy vault, roofed by a dense mass of sullen vapour. A damp wind blew in fitful gusts, chilly as in an English November, proving by more senses than one how essential sunshine is to the beauty of a landscape, and the enjoyment of it. As I walked about,

wrapped in my overcoat, till the hour of departure, I could hardly regret leaving Chamonix.

Punctually at nine o'clock, two *voitures* were drawn up at the door of the *bureau*: a family of three occupied the foremost, the other I had all to myself. Off we set at a tolerably brisk pace, which, before we had gone a mile, convinced us that the temper of the springs was anything but yielding. Presently, we came to the top of the long steep descent known as the Montets, up or down which travellers are requested to walk. It is truly a formidable plunge, rugged and rocky, but commanding some grand views of the deep gorge of the Arve, dark with pine-woods, and of a precipitous mountain-ridge, bristling with mighty battlements in the distance. It is one of those spots which you prefer to pass on foot, and which repay the exertion. Down—down—down you go, finding the bottom farther off than you expected. As we descended, I felt a gradual change of temperature: we passed from the chilly upper region to one of genial warmth, enlivened by a few faint gleams of sunshine. You reach the hill-foot some time before the *voitures*, and, crossing the stream, may take a farewell view of the scene while waiting their arrival. The bridge here is the well known Pont Pelissier, a favourite spot with artists, who say, there are few finer scenes in the Alps than this magnificent gorge. Having no skill with the pencil, I sought the more to carry away a mind-picture that might haply reappear, if summoned when far from the original. The chaises were long in coming, and while thinking over the difference between the picturesque and the romantic, I fell into a reverie, which, among other loose recollections, brought to memory some lines by Tollens:—

O, thus to revel, thus to range,
I'll yield the counter, bank, or change;
The business crowds, all peace destroying;
The toil, with snow that roofs our brains;
The seeds of care, which harvests pains;
The wealth, for more which strives and strains,
Still less and *less* enjoying.

At Servoz, a short distance farther, a halt is made to bait the horses, during which operation you may walk up and down on the road in front of the inn, and get a few glimpses into the Val Mont Joie, or contemplate the mountain which rises close behind the little village. Here the sun shone out, and all was pleasant; but in the direction of Chamonix, the clouds still hung in heavy unbroken masses.

Immediately on leaving Servoz, the road rises, twisting hither and thither through a soil so loose and stony as to render the ascent extremely tedious. Now you understand why the *voitures* are made with the strength and stubbornness of wagons; nothing else would resist the rude shocks and formidable impediments of the route. If patience and philosophy be among your virtues and acquirements, now is the time to exercise them. The road is remarkable in many respects. In one place it is gravelly, in another black and miry as an Irish bog; a little farther, and you fancy the wheels are crunching the refuse of a coal-pit, interrupted here and there by a layer of large lumps of rock, which make you feel how rudimentary is macadamization in the mountains. It has, too, the appearance of being always unfinished, for the rains work such mischief as they sweep across it from the heights above, that constant repair is necessary. The havoc chiefly takes place in the hollows, where a stream rushes down. Such

places are numerous; and although many parties of men were repairing the damage, it was with great difficulty we were dragged through them, swaying from side to side, and with water up to the axles. No wonder the road is at times impassable!

These harsh features are, however, softened by the scenery, through which the wild route is led. In some places where you least expect such a surprise, you see a cottage nestling in a snug nook, an orchard behind it, and in front a well-stocked garden, decked with beds of brilliant flowers. The whole way, too, is delightfully overshadowed; at times, a few tall firs lean darkly across the road, while birch, walnut, cherry, and apple trees, form a continuous green avenue, pleasant as a Worcestershire lane. Here and there, through breaks in the maze of branches, you get peeps at the opposite side of the valley, and see the church tower of St. Gervais rising from a rich mass of wood, or the heads of the great outliers of Mont Blanc. At the foot of the last slope, we plunged suddenly into a broad, shallow river, that had burst its bounds a few days previously, and washed away all signs of the road, and made a channel a hundred yards in width. A wagon drawn by three horses, was stuck fast in the middle, and the driver sat with rueful countenance, his feet propped on the wheel. Just beyond, a man was wading, and a woman stood on the farther bank looking wistfully at the swift stream, as though debating with herself the chances of crossing. It would perhaps be hardly possible to find a road which presents, in a short distance, so many local difficulties.

We were now on level ground, and rattled merrily onwards. By and by Sallenches came into view; we crossed

the bridge over the Arve, from whence there is a striking and well-known view of the higher summits of Mont Blanc, and drew up at the hotel, where you may dine while waiting for the diligencé which comes from Geneva, and goes no farther, owing to the impracticable road, as may be easily imagined. Presently the huge vehicle arrived, laden with passengers for Chamonix, and forthwith the long dining-table in the *salle*, was crowded with a talkative company—Swiss, German, French, and English, the latter, with a few Americans, being most numerous. A lively demand ensued for bread and butter, cold meat, chicken, wine, beer, and coffee; and then the *voitures* came into requisition, and two being insufficient, two others were brought out, and all were completely filled with passengers and their luggage. The loading gave rise to a scene of noise, bustle, and confusion, intermingled with not a few maledictions, which seems to be a natural consequence when people are afraid of losing either their places or their portmanteaux. The diligence was ready first; I mounted to the *banquette*, and on looking back before we reached the bridge, I saw the four *voitures* set off on their journey to Chamonix. How, heavily laden as they were, they got through the stony river, the rushing torrents, and the spongy patches of the road, I have never been able to imagine.

The road from Sallenches to Geneva, about thirty-six miles, follows the course of the Arve nearly the whole of the distance, along a valley which, in some of its features, reminded me of the scenery around Matlock. There are the same precipitous *tors*, and grassy hollows, and tree-clad cliffs, but on a greater scale, and with sufficient variety to engage the attention. The sunshine, which had begun to

peep at Servoz, gradually increased as we lowered our elevation, until all was summer warmth and brightness; and the road being excellent, the journey proved exhilarating. Now you are close to the river—now traversing a well-cultivated level, round which the stream curves to the other side of the valley—now mounting the shoulder of a hill, or skirting the base of a lofty cliff. You pass the Nant d'Arpenaz, the highest waterfall in Savoy, seen to best advantage in rainy weather, when it is really a fall of water and not of mist. There is a grotto, too, near the hamlet of La Balme, which may be visited by those who are curious to creep nearly half a mile into the heart of a mountain by candlelight, or to enjoy the prospect on returning to the entrance. Then there is a fine sight of the Mole—a Snowdon-like hill, but nearly 3,000 feet higher—a striking object in the view from Geneva. Then the old town of Cluses, built in a pass between mighty walls of rock: formerly noted for pugnacity, now for plodding. While changing horses here, I bought as many cherries for four sous, as lasted me in the eating all the way to Bonneville: "*Ma foi!*" exclaimed the lusty Savoyarde who sold them, "I am in luck to-day." Farther on are a couple of villages on the Sardinian frontier, at each of which a halt is made in front of a house, distinguished from the others by having written over the door—*Carabiniers Royaux. Bureaux de verification des Passports.* The inspection was quietly and civilly made, and all being in order, we passed without delay or difficulty. On again, the number of beggars and other artful specimens of riff-raff, with which this road is infested, becoming fewer; and the people you meet appearing to have something to do, which was not the case with those left

behind. On each side of the road, indications multiply of an approach to a populous city: the Salève is seen rising boldly in the background of the picture; but men and not mountains begin to occupy your attention, as elegant vehicles filled with well-dressed ladies and gentlemen dash past, and graceful villas embosomed in trees, enliven the borders of the route. Then people sauntering out in the cool of the evening, and at last Geneva comes into view, its tall white houses reflecting themselves in the blue waters of its beautiful lake. At the De la Rive gate, an official demands all the passports, giving you in return a printed card, which must be presented at the bureau in the Hotel de Ville, when you reclaim the precious document. A few minutes more, and you alight in a busy street of the largest city of the Swiss republic, the "Rome of Protestants," and the head-quarters of Calvinism.

"*Pas de place,*" "*Impossible,*" "*Tout est rempli,*" were the answers at the inns where I first inquired for a room; at length the *Lion d'Or* proved more hospitable or less overguested, and assigned me a chamber. It was seven o'clock; *table d'hôte* was announced for eight: I spent the hour's interval on the noble quay, which, washed by the lake, extends the whole breadth of the town. Along the margin lay moored a number of light, graceful, pleasure-boats, with scarlet awnings; a few were skimming the surface of the water before a pleasant breeze, a couple of steam-boats hung at the landing-place,—and, far as eye could reach stretched the lake, bounded in the distance by the dark and rugged mountains of Savoy, against which the lateen sails of a few trading vessels showed like the outstretched wings of large birds, gliding slowly in the

light of the setting sun. There was life and movement, too, on the spacious quay, for while groups of idlers leaned over the parapet-wall looking dreamily at the water, others who were not idlers paced the pavement on either side, while trucks and wagons plying to or from the steam-boat and diligence offices, where the sign-boards indicated communication with all parts of Europe, made up a scene to which the rapid rattle of a passing carriage added the finishing touch,—leisure, business, and pleasure. On the shore of the lake beyond the wall, a number of women were washing in what was to me a novel way. Standing in their empty tubs at a greater or lesser distance from the margin, according to the height of the staves, they had a clear scope of water all around them, in which to souse and rinse their clothes. The little tubs were nearest to the edge, those of greater capacity a few feet beyond, while one, big enough for a mash-tub, with three women in it, stood in three feet of water. As I watched the group of Naiads at their plashy vocation, I could not help thinking that "clear placid Leman" is a "contrasted lake" in more senses than those imagined by the poet.

On my way back to the hotel, I took a place in the diligence for Lyon, so as to insure a seat on the *banquette;* and there being a spirited competition along the route, paid but twelve francs for the whole distance. Dinner was ready punctual to the hour, and was so well dressed as to call forth repeated commendations from some half-dozen Frenchmen, among whom I found myself at one end of the table. As usual, they were very talkative, and we had some discourse about the pleasures of travelling in Switzerland. One of them, however, thought eating to be the chief consideration, and declared that in France alone

could one's appetite be appeased with anything like refinement or satisfaction. He made himself very merry on the subject of English cookery: "Only think," he said, "of boiling fish in water, and serving it up *au naturel!* What sort of a people must they be who are content to eat their fish in that way? And, then, they devour potatoes with everything. But, worst of all, is their *rosbif. C'est une horreur!* They set before you a huge lump of an ox with all the gravy in it."

Some of the others shrugged their shoulders and laughed heartily at this culinary picture, when I ventured to ask, "Have any of you ever eaten roast-beef in London?"

"Ah! ah!" they broke out, "*Voilà!* Monsieur is an Englishman." Not one, however, had ever visited England.

I ventured to tell them they would change their opinion whenever they crossed the channel, and instanced certain Frenchmen, who, during the Great Exhibition, entered a well known tavern in Fleet-street in search of a dinner. A fine sirloin was placed before them, on which one, taking up his knife and fork, exclaimed, "*Enfin, c'est du rosbif!*" and helped himself and his companions largely. So well satisfied were they with the joint, that they forbade its being carried to the other tables; and when they tasted the "half-and-half" their delight knew no bounds.

"I don't doubt it," said one of the party, who had kept silence, "for though I have never been to England, I once ate roast beef at an English house at Calais, and I can assure you that it is excellent, especially with gravy to the potatoes. *Monsieur a raison.*"

This unexpected testimony made the others less posi-

tive, if it did not convince them; and the discussion dropped by the one who had begun it saying, "After all, it must be confessed that if the English are bad cooks, they are the nation of most good sense in the world." Whether he meant it or not, the Frenchman had spoken a great truth, and no one disputed it.

There is a small island in the lake connected with the quay by a bridge, which in summer evenings is much resorted to as a place of recreation. It is well planted with trees, under which you may sit and listen to the sweet strains of music, and refresh yourself with coffee or an ice, while gazing abroad on the lake or on the dark violet-blue stream of the Rhone, which here rushes past with great velocity. The moon sent down a silvery flood upon the water, that rippled into innumerable flashes as the soft cool breeze swept over the surface, while near the shore the lights from the street-lamps and houses were reflected as dancing feathers of flame. I lingered long in contemplation of the beautiful scene.

Looking round after a time, I found the island nearly deserted. An individual who leaned against the railing not far from my side, taking advantage of a question I asked him concerning a large building visible on the opposite shore of the lake, followed up his reply by a fervid declamation on political matters directed against Louis Napoleon. He was an exile, and fiercely did he denounce those who had banished him. Of the *coup d'état* and its author he spoke with the intensest bitterness, and became voluble with scandals respecting the occupants of the Tuileries, and prophecies as to the fate that awaits them.

CHAPTER XV.

The bowery shore
Went off in gentle windings to the hoar
And light blue mountains.—KEATS.

In merriment they quaff,
And cast about their gibes.—DYER.

All in such rare disorder, that in some
As it breeds pity, and in others wonder;
So in the most part laughter.—HEYWOOD.

JUDGING from appearances Geneva is a prosperous place; numbers of new buildings were rising in different parts of the city and neighbourhood, and there is an absence of squalor in the most densely populated streets, which betokens a state of comfort or propriety but rarely met with in towns of similar size in England. I rambled about some of the worst quarters in a before-breakfast survey on the morning of my arrival, and saw many more signs of industry than of idleness, indicative of a well-conducted population, brisk without frivolity, and sober without sourness, such as the French would perhaps become were they all Protestants. Indeed, the people here have long been remarkable for a self-reliant spirit: Bonaparte used to say of them, "*Les Genevois parlent trop bien Anglais pour moi*," which is, perhaps, one of the reasons why they keep their independence and their

liberties. The lines of houses overlooking the lake, reminded me of the river-fronts of some of the streets in New York, all having a light and new aspect; but there are quarters which still retain many features of the past in their antiquated architecture; and beyond are the ramparts and drawbridges over the deep waters of the moat, and public walks and pleasant gardens: hence, a stroll presents a pleasing variety. The streets named *Guillaume Tell*, *Jean Jacques Rousseau*, and others with historic names, recall memories of heroes and events that add to the interest of the perambulation, reminding you that here is classic ground. A sketcher would find a few picturesque "bits" at the water's edge in the old part of the town, and illustrations of character among the numbers of women, who work and talk so industriously in the great floating wash-houses moored in the river. Here the Rhone rushes past swift as a mill-race, and so "beautifully blue" that it seems a desecration to give it up to washerwomen, and to the tanners whose works are erected on its brink a little lower down. And yet the sight inclines you to envy the people whose linen is cleansed in a stream of such purity and depth of colour.

I had promised myself a trip down the lake, and at eight o'clock the steamer started. As I stepped on board, a man who stood at the gangway, with a book and pencil in his hand, asked me whither I was going, and set down my answer, and the same with all the other passengers; the object being apparently to check the issue of tickets. The passengers were numerous, with a contented well-to-do look about them, and in high spirits at the fineness of the weather and the prospect of a holiday, for most of them went on shore at Coppet, Nyon, or Morges, pretty villages much frequented by the Genevese in the summer.

How the children skipped and danced in anticipation of their pastimes; and it was gratifying to see how entirely the parents entered into their feelings, not ashamed to play the part of real fathers and mothers in public, nor checking the liveliness of the little ones by admonitions to be "good." Presently, a keen-eyed Vaudois, laying a shallow box on the deck, took from it rings, bells, knives, and other apparatus of a conjurer, and proceeded to show off his sleight of hand, solely, as he said, for the amusement of the company. He did not want money himself, only the people at the house where he slept would insist upon being paid for his night's lodging, and it was merely to be able to satify their vexatious demand that he formed a chain of the rings, lengthening and shortening it with as much ease as though iron were an unsubstantial thing. It was only for this that the fifteen counters became twenty the moment you dropped them into his saucer, or that the calico bag which he shook before your eyes proved to be no bag, but a *poule à œufs* that laid half a dozen eggs in rapid succession. Need it be said that sous and small coins were dropped into the saucer when it went round, which, though they did not multiply in the same mysterious manner as the counters, perhaps sufficed for the professor's disinterested wants. The children lost none of the amusement, for those at the back were held up to get a good view.

The Pays de Vaud which forms the northern shore of the lake, is less beautiful than description had led me to expect. It rises with a gradual slope, presenting a succession of vineyards, which give a monotonous character to the landscape: but in the neighbourhood of towns and villages, the eye is charmed by the rich foliage of the trees, growing so thickly among the houses as to give

them all the appearance of standing in a wood. Lausanne, situate about a mile from the shore, looks particularly pleasant from the water; so pleasant indeed that you wonder Gibbon did not find himself inspired to write in a style appealing more to the heart than the head. The great historian's is not the only name you will think of during the voyage, for many are the celebrities that have dwelt on these shores: some Englishmen, and some—Rousseau and Voltaire, for instance,—sufficiently animated to make up for want of vivacity in all the rest.

Smoothly the vessel sped on its way, now and then running in to disembark a troop of passengers at one of the pretty-looking, well-shaded villages, distinguished from afar by the tall, red-tiled church tower, and taking others on board, among whom sun-burnt rustics were numerous. The variety in dress was highly refreshing to contemplate, and not less so the apparent fact, that people who dressed to please themselves could feel so much at their ease. Sometimes the vessel stood far out towards the middle of the lake, and then the tourists, of whom not a few were on board, brought out their maps and made out the sites on both shores at once. Half a dozen school-boys, equipped with knapsacks and gipsires, were going for a week's ramble among the mountains of Savoy, whose bold and rugged outlines formed so striking a feature in the distance. How eagerly they discussed their plans, keeping their eyes fixed as if by enchantment on the land of promise. Sundry citizens of Geneva were bound for Vevay on a gastronomic holiday, and they beguiled the time by laying plans as to the what, when, and where, they should eat and drink. I got into conversation with one whose fair round corporation gave him an appearance

truly aldermanic, and who was an original in more ways than one. He wore a white hat, yellow coat and waistcoat, a sky blue neckerchief, and gingham trowsers, cross-barred in what Oxford men call a "loud" pattern, and buff boots. No one, however, appeared to pay any attention to so strange a costume; certainly no one laughed at it. The wearer, moreover, could talk of something else as well as dinners, and as we went along he pointed out places and objects on the shore, touching on their peculiarities, or giving snatches of personal history, with much humour and shrewdness. He knew the region well, and had walked all over it in his younger days; "But now," he said, slapping his rotundity, "*je porte de la marchandise, et cela m'empèche,*" and followed the slap by one of his hearty fat laughs, that was quite contagious. He greatly commended my intention of landing at Vevay: "You will find it," he said, "*une vraie bonbonnière de ville, tout-à-fait charmante.* And then you know you will have plenty of time for a good dinner before the steamer returns." Eating, at all events, seemed to be necessary to complete his idea of pleasure.

The lake of Geneva is about fifty-five miles long, from two to nine miles wide, and in one place, near Meillerie, not less than 900 feet deep. Apart from all its interesting associations, it is at times the scene of certain remarkable phenomena. Its level varies from four to five feet in the course of a year, being lowest in winter, and highest in summer, when the forty-one streams which fall into it, besides the Rhone, are increased by the melting of snow on the hills. Then there are the *seiches*, the local name for changes of level which take place all on a sudden. These may be described as an irregular wave or oscillation,

from two to five feet in height, appearing sometimes at one place, sometimes at another, but mostly near Geneva, and continuing from fifteen to thirty minutes. Unequal atmospheric pressure is supposed to be the cause, but it is one of those extraordinary disturbances which will perhaps puzzle meteorologists for a few years to come. The mud brought down by the Rhone from the two mighty mountain chains between which it flows, encroaches slowly on the eastern end; the learned in such matters point to the fifteen miles of alluvium behind Villeneuve as a proof of what a course of ages will effect in the displacement of water by land.

During the fine season a steamer starts every day from each end of the lake, and returns the same day, thus affording opportunity for a visit to any part of the route. No return tickets are given. From Geneva to Vevay and back, cost me nine francs on the fore deck. There are vessels also which ply along the Savoy shore two or three times a week, so that a tourist not in a hurry might make a complete tour of the lake. Where there are no landing piers, large boats come off to take you on shore, or put you on board without any additional expense.

As we went on every stroke of the paddles brought us nearer to the mountains that shut in the eastern end of the lake with rocky cliffs, or green slopes well covered with wood, among which are winding paths such as the wayfarer loves, so pleasantly are they embowered by the maze of branches, and so charming are the views obtained through breaks in the foliage. Far in the distance rose some of the snow-capped peaks, neighbours of the St. Bernard, contrasting beautifully with the deep dark purple of the heights in the foreground that overshadow Ville-

neuve, and form a gorge-like entrance to the Vallais. It gladdened me to see them again, and I gazed on their glistening summits with a feeling akin to that which warms the heart at the sight of a friend. There was the reflection, too, that the morrow would see me miles away, where no glimpse of mountains would greet mine eyes, and it brought a touch of sadness. I had seen much, but how much more left unseen! and when might I be able to visit Switzerland again? These thoughts made me keep my eyes fixed on the distant peaks which were to remain among my last impressions of a land which, while commanding our admiration by the grandeur of its natural scenery, appeals strongly to other feelings. Cradled here among the mountains, Liberty grew from timid infancy to brave and vigorous manhood, enduring and indomitable as the rocks, which, having served as its bulwark, have now become its shrine. From these the treasons and the armies of Tyranny recoiled as waves from a seaward cliff; and on their weather-beaten summits Freedom lit a beacon that shines still among the nations. And although its light may have dimmed, and the fire slackened, yet there has been proved how arms can strike and hearts beat that love liberty for its own sake. To such a land the finger of History points with pride: may it never be averted in shame!

Two boat-loads of passengers were put on shore at Vevay, while the steamer kept on for Villeneuve. There were two hours and a half at my disposal before her return, so I lost no time in looking for the beauties of the "*bonbonnière*." The town looks pleasant enough from the water, but the first view of the great dusty square where you step on shore is disappointing. I bought a

two-penny loaf, and eating as I walked, explored one street, and then another, without seeing anything to justify the praises lavished on the place. There is an air of respectable provincial dullness about it: just such a town as half-pay officers choose to wear out their laurels in. Perhaps, I thought, the beauty is in the environs, and I walked out north, west, and east, but with no better success; there was nothing but dusty roads, bare walls, vineyards, and scarcely a tree to keep off the scorching glare of the sun. The pleasantest route was that towards Chillon, where a few fine walnut-trees overshadow a public walk. Here I sat down to finish my loaf, and took a drink from the lake that fringed the pebbly beach with gleaming wavelets, which, impelled by the glorious breeze, broke at my feet.

If Vevay itself struck me as having been overrated, not so the views it commands. I sought every vantage point for a sight of the Savoy mountains, and the expanse of blue flashing water between. There is such variety in the form of the hills, so much to favour effects of light and shadow, that with the living movement of the lake, a scene is made up which pleases whenever looked upon.

As the hour of return drew on, I made my way towards the square, and mounted to the *salle* of an hotel close by, for a cup of coffee. The stair landings of some of the Swiss hotels are an abomination, from the noisome odours which there find vent, but this was more offensive than any I had yet visited. And to think that on one side of this foul spot is the door of the best room in the house, on the other the kitchen! I should have retreated in disgust had I not seen that the *salle* gave access to a terrace platform overhanging the lake, where the breeze

blew freshly, and an awning screened the solar ray. Here I found my portly friend of the morning, sipping little glasses of kirschwasser amid an uproarious party of men in blouses, whose dusty feet, Alpenstocks, and knapsacks, betokened a tramp among the mountains. They were Genevese handicraftsmen who had been to Chamonix for a ten days' holiday, and were now on their way home as merry as marmots. One of them might have sat as the model of John Browdie, so tall and broad-shouldered was his figure, and so dry his humour; another, dressed *à la militaire*, was thick and squab, and a fencing-master: the best profession he could have chosen, said one of his companions, as he carried about with him plenty of cushion to repel sword points.

Soon the steamer was seen passing the castle of Chillon, and we all went and took our seats in the boats, which pushed off in good time, to save delay. We had not been long on board when a tiara was produced from one of the knapsacks, and placed on the head of the stalwart individual above mentioned. It was made of scarlet and yellow leather, with keys, and certain mysterious devices traced on each horn in black paint. With this on his head he stalked about the deck, grave as a dromedary, and to the no small amusement of his companions. I inquired what it meant, and as there were two priests on board, asked whether it was to vex them with a mock papal tiara. Nothing of the sort. The party formed a club, of which the crowned individual was the chief, and the devices had a meaning known only to the initiated, and not to be revealed to outsiders. As to the real signification, said my interlocutor, as he finished, with a touch of sly humour, "*C'est perdu dans l'histoire.*"

"Goes back, no doubt, to the ichthyosaurus?" I said.

"*Oui, c'est ça,*" was his answer, with a knowing wink.

Whatever were the articles of faith, imbibition was clearly among them, for each man carried a bottle, or little cask, slung to his shoulder, and they adjourned repeatedly to the fore-cabin to drink. This process they alternated with singing, for when they came up again, they gathered in a circle in the peak of the bow, and with lusty voice and strong, sang in praise of liberty, and of a military life, which, in the words of the *refrain*, was "*un bon etat,*" and full of attractions for "*le vrai soldat.*" This was followed by secret signs and gesticulations, all of which seemed just as inexplicable to natives as to foreigners.

The clouds which had hung over Mont Blanc in the morning had now cleared away, and as we approached the city, a break in the shore gave us a view of the glorious mountain, standing proudly up against the clear blue sky, presenting its snowy brow to the declining sunbeams. Though sixty miles distant, it seemed but little beyond the water's verge, so deceptive is such a mighty mass seen through a clear, bright atmosphere. It was my farewell gaze, and I watched the Alpine monarch as long as he remained in view. Meanwhile the conjurer, who had come on board again at Nyon, was diverting the crowd behind me with his tricks, and making them laugh at his protestations of disinterestedness.

When within hearing of the quay, the secret society set up another hearty song, which attracted a crowd of listeners, who came running from all quarters. Firing of cannon greeted our arrival; and we had not long been

moored when the singers, in single file, each with his staff, and the popish-looking leader at their head, marched on shore and through the streets, keeping up their chorus as they went; and this I could still hear after they had passed out of sight round the corner of a street.

It was seven o'clock: still an hour to dinner-time, which I spent in a stroll to some parts of the city that I had not before visited. Between nine and ten my passport was to be reclaimed,—a fatiguing and offensive task, so dirty and unsavoury were the *commissionaires* come on a similar errand, and so wearisome the half hour's waiting in the hot and stifling office at the *Hôtel de Ville.* I took a turn up and down the bridge to cool myself before going to bed, and there met with an agreeable surprise in the persons of the artist and his family whom I had left at Thun. It was one of those travel-chances which for a time makes you think a dream has come true. We shook hands with mutual pleasure, and talked of what we had done and meant to do. They were going to Paris the next day by one route, I by another; and as we all had to rise early, we delayed not too long, and parted once more with friendly wishes.

CHAPTER XVI.

The daily burden for the back.—TENNYSON.

We were in Italy together, and all of us came home with our English religion and our English principles.—HEYWOOD.

Please to stop.—SAM SLICK.

PACKING away the shoulder-straps into the inside of my knapsack on the following morning reminded me so forcibly that my wanderings on foot were over, as to inspire me with a slight feeling of something like melancholy. The preparations for the day's march had always been a work of pleasure, one that seemed to give a definite reality to expectation, as article after article was snugly packed into its accustomed place, and the final strap tightened. Then the inanimate burden, notwithstanding its tendency to feel heavy after the sixth or seventh league, had become, as it were, part of myself—a companionable thing—a wayside pillow for a doze in shady places, claiming some sort of affection through long association, and not denied.

For this it was that made me move
As light as carrier birds in air;
I loved the weight I had to bear
Because it needed help of Love.

Not till another July came round would it again cling to my shoulders or administer to my necessities.

Whatever the dye that tinged my musings it instantly evaporated as I emerged from the shaded street into the early sunlight that shone upon the quay, and the lake beyond that seemed not yet to have shaken off its nightly slumber, so perfectly calm lay the broad blue expanse under a thin veil of haze which softened objects without concealing them. The diligence was to start at a quarter to six, and there it stood at the office-door, the centre of a little bustle and noise, where all else was silent. I mounted to the *banquette*, and was followed by an individual somewhat Quaker-like in appearance, who, when the list was called, answered to the name of Kussmaul. The clerk found it difficult to pronounce, and said in an under tone to one of his companions, "Whoever invented such a name as that?" The German overheard and retorted, addressing himself to me, "Did you ever see such people as these? A foreign name seems to choke them. They boast of their French politeness, but there is a good deal of rudeness too."

It was a glorious morning: soon the city was left behind, and we were trotting at a brisk pace along a capital road bordered by high hedges and rows of trees, chiefly walnut. The lower branches hung so low that but for the leathern hood under which we sat, our heads would have met with sundry hard and dangerous knocks, as it was, we could not help ducking every time we dashed into the leafy maze which seemed about to sweep us away. There must be a considerable loss of walnuts from these repeated collisions; not a single one hung on the lower branches.

After a few miles the road begins to descend, and then

it is downhill all the way, and as league after league slopes away in the distance, the great elevation of the mountain land seems to impress itself sensibly on the mind, and you feel more and more that it is indeed left behind. Ere long the Jura range comes into view, and while you are looking for a break or a passage over them, the road turns and runs along their base; and notices against begging fixed on posts at the wayside denote that you have passed the frontier and entered the *Département de l' Ain.* At Collonges another proof of being in France presents itself in the shape of a formidable-looking personage in uniform surmounted by a large cocked hat, who demands your passport. Here the German had to undergo another trial of his patience, for after a solemn examination of his passport by the official gentleman who stood in the middle of the road during the scrutiny, he was told that not being *viséd* for France it was useless "Nŏt *viséd!*" cried the German; "hand it up again, I will show you that is *viséd.*" The man in the cocked hat, however, refused to give up the document; whereupon the other, leaning from his seat, with choleric words and gesticulations, made the impassible functionary aware of a *visé* by the French minister at Carlsruhe, among a score of others. Still he shook his head, and seemed reluctant to admit the validity of the signature, while the conductor began to curse and growl at the delay, and the poor German turned to me with the ejaculation, "More French politeness!"

"Who knows?" I answered; "perhaps he suspects us to be Kossuth and Mazzini, the two *bêtes noires* of the continent for the time being." My passport, however

passed the ordeal without a word of criticism or censure, which seemed to re-assure the cocked hat, and we were suffered to proceed.

"*Allez!*" cried the conductor, adding, as we rolled away, "*Est-il bête!*" He placed our passports very carefully in the case which hung from his neck, for they were not yet to be returned to us.

Now we came to a pass in the mountains between Mont Vouache on the Savoy side, and Mont Credo in France, guarded by Fort de l'Écluse, situate among wild and striking scenery, and perfectly commanding the route in either direction. The road passes through the fortress, and the vehicle clatters over a drawbridge in going in and going out, and moves slowly through small square courts, and a narrow passage fenced by walls of granite, where moustachioed sentries pace up and down with fixed bayonets. The grim edifice is perched on the crags about halfway up the mountain, and there is something tremendous in the depth of the gorge through which the Rhone rushes in a succession of rapids. Unless reduced to silence by a cannonading from the heights above, the stronghold appears to an unprofessional observer such as to bid defiance to all intruders, and keep them out of the pass: once, however, it fell into the hands of the Austrians. It forms a striking object in the view when looked back upon from the road which sweeps boldly down the hill in a series of rapid inclines. There are many places along the route which afford admirable specimens of what French engineers can accomplish to facilitate locomotion in a hilly country. And here as well as on other occasions during the ride I could not but admire the skill with which the lumbering vehicle was

guided down slopes apparently too steep for any animal but a goat. The conductor kept the break-winch well screwed up; but in some places a drag was put on besides, and even then we went at a pace that would have astonished a Cumberland coachman in his palmiest days. It is the more surprising as the drivers are rough-looking fellows, with nothing to distinguish them from the roadside population. Some were young, others aged, some stolid, some vivacious, some had caps, some glazed hats, but all wore the omnipresent blue cotton blouse. They, however, knew how to do their work, and did it well; asked for no fees, and yet were civil withal. One qualification they possessed to perfection; it came into play whenever a poor woman with her cow, or a wagoner failed to get promptly out of our way, and a *roulade* of execrations and vituperations was rattled out with amazing volubility. *Vache*, *Savoyard*, and *ramoneur*, were the favourite expletives, seasoned by platoons of pungent maledictions, the conductor coming up with his reserve at critical moments. Such a vocabulary could only have been acquired by long practice. I could not fail to observe, what I had before remarked when travelling in France, that the drivers of public vehicles are savages to their horses.

Near the foot of the descent we passed the *Perte du Rhone*, a chasm in the gorge into which the river plunges, and is lost in an unfathomable abyss, to reappear a short distance farther on. Unlike some other streams that hide themselves for a time under the earth, floating substances thrown in on one side never come to the surface again on the other. Hereabouts are some good bits of river scenery, if we had but time to view them at leisure.

Competition is now so active between Geneva and Lyons, that none but the briefest halts are allowed. The quick changing of horses reminded me of the old coaching days in England, and not till ten o'clock was time afforded us for breakfast. At that hour we arrived at Bellegarde, and drove into a large barn-like building, which stands at one side of the principal street, and found ourselves caught like so many innocent mice in a trap, for it was the custom-house. Here the baggage was strictly examined, and numbers of articles were laid aside by the keen-eyed searchers to be charged with duty. My knapsack, as usual, escaped scot-free, and no sooner had the inspector passed it, than I hastened, hunger-driven, to the hotel on the opposite side of the street, in search of breakfast. The table was already spread with the elements of a substantial repast—*bouilli*, soup, *rôti*, chicken, &c., and a double row of bottles of wine—a cheering sight for a traveller with an appetite. The waiting-maid was prompt in her service, and I lost no time in breaking my long fast. The other passengers came in by twos and threes, according to the progress of the examination, and in time the table was surrounded. Last of all came the conductor: I had wondered why his blouse hung so large and loose about him, but soon wondered no longer, for I saw the bright-eyed waiting-maid, notwithstanding the many calls on her nimble service, slip slily into his hands, whenever she approached him, small paper packets that resembled nothing so much as bundles of cigars. The conductor took them as slily as they were given, and thrust them one after the other into pockets cunningly contrived inside his blouse, until he had concealed some two or three dozen, at the same time casting furtive glances

around, perhaps to see if he were observed. The coolness with which the girl managed her part in this evasion of the imperial imposts was remarkable, and clever too, for with the same movement that she handed a plate or a bottle of wine she conveyed one of the neat little bundles. The conductor ate with a perfectly grave countenance, yet I could not help fancying that he chuckled to himself at "doing" the officials, who were so extremely rigid with strangers. A great smuggling trade is carried on all along the frontier. It is no uncommon occurrence for a man to pass from the Swiss to the French territory with one-hundred-and-fifty watches sewn into the linings of his waistcoat.

On re-entering the barn, a civil gentleman requested me to step into his *bureau*, when he gave me back my passport, and asked whether I had anything contraband about me. "I never smoke, so don't want cigars," I answered; "and as for other things, we can buy them cheaper in England, so there's no inducement to smuggle."

"*C'est bien, monsieur; passez!*" he replied, with a merry laugh.

One after the other underwent the same catechising, until we had all regained our seats. The German was consoled for the ruffling of his temper at Collonges by finding no demur to his passport at Bellegarde; meantime, the horses were put to, and the doors at the farther end of the edifice being opened, we drove out, but with such wretched hacks, that not till they had been mercilessly flogged for two or three miles could they be forced into a trot. I suggested to the driver that oats would be found far more invigorating than the whip: "*Est-ce que ça me regarde?*" he answered.

On we went again, now uphill, now down, but always descending to a lower level. Through miserable villages, and towns that looked still more miserable from the absence of anything like the life, business, cleanliness, and order that a town is expected to present. By-and-by we came to Nantua, pleasantly situated between two lakes, lying calm at the feet of steep hills bristling with firs, amid picturesque scenery. Altogether, there are about thirty miles of the route which I should have liked to travel on foot; the other parts are of the monotonous, uninteresting level that forms so large a portion of the surface of France.

We (that is, the German and myself) found wherewith in talk to beguile the time. He was going to Marseilles and on to Nice for the benefit of his health; but when I told him that July was far too hot for the shores of the Mediterranean, he changed his plan after a ten miles' cogitation, and instead of Nice resolved on Dieppe. He did so the less unwillingly, as he had never seen Paris; and being imperfectly acquainted with the language, thought my experience would be of service to him; so we agreed to travel to the capital in company. Among other matters, he gave me a chapter of his history, which in few words was, that he had been a medical student in Baden; had joined the insurrection of 1848, and, forced to flee, had since then practised as a physician near Basel. The fatigue of a rural district proving too severe, he had sold his practice, and was now bent on recruiting his exhausted constitution on the shores of the sea. Poor fellow! he had had a hard struggle, but found it good discipline. How he lamented that his wife and little son could not accompany him! Then he spoke of a friend of

his who had been obliged to seek safety in England; and of his sister who had accompanied her husband to the same refuge for the oppressed. Old memories came thick upon him as he talked; and though he tried to conceal his emotions, the tears would start, and the drops, sacred to affection, fell fast from his eyes. My heart warmed towards him as I saw these traces of feeling; and the hope of smoothing his way gave me the more pleasure.

On we went, slower as the day wore on, but still the same brief halt on changing horses; so brief, that not a moment could be seized for a run to a fountain or a cabaret: there was to be no more eating or drinking till we got to Lyon. A few years ago the time spent on the journey was twenty-four hours, now twelve hours only are allotted, but not always strictly kept. We had the broad stream of the Ain on our left for many miles, its shores bordered by vineyards and wheat-fields. Frequently we met long trains of ten or twenty wagons, labouring slowly along with merchandise from Lyon for Switzerland and Savoy, denoting an important transport trade; one for which railways will ere long furnish a more rapid channel. At length, about seven in the evening, we came in sight of Lyon,—a sight beautiful in itself, and the more pleasing when contrasted with the monotonous landscape we had just traversed. We could see the river branching among numerous islands, Les Brotteaux, the high houses of La Croix Rousse, the heights of Fourviers, and the usual features of a great city. Soon we were on the uais, which are truly magnificent. London has nothing to equal them.

There was another examination of passports at the diligence-office; but there was no touching of hats with a hint

to "remember" the driver or conductor; and, crossing the Place Bellecour, we shortly afterwards were seated at a late dinner in the *Hôtel de Provence*. Prompt as our movements had been in some respects, we were more than thirteen hours on the road, a distance of ninety-three miles.

The next day we devoted to a survey of the busy city. On our way up to Fourviers before breakfast, we passed the Marché aux Veaux, where hundreds of calves, with their feet tied together, were laid in rows, overlapping each other in a way which, though it economised space, by no means economised suffering, if uneasy bleatings may be accepted as evidence. We were disappointed in the view from the terrace, where stands the church of *Our Lady of Fourviers*, for a dark cloud of smoke, such as Londoners are accustomed to, lay over the city, concealing alike near and distant objects, and cheating us of a last glimpse of Mont Blanc, which, though 100 miles distant, is visible from hence in favourable weather. Then we walked down to the confluence of the Rhone and Saône; the former has lost all its ultramarine, in its long winding course from Geneva, and the two unite their waters of a greenish muddy hue. Then to Les Brotteaux, where victims were swept down wholesale by grape-shot in the days of the revolution, and where a funereal monument records their fate and perpetuates their memory. Then to the Hôtel de Ville, the cathedral, the barracks, the public library, picture-galleries, and museum—the latter famous for relics of the days when Lyon was a Roman city:—

> Intaglios rude, old pottery, and store
> Of mutilated gods of stone, and scraps
> Of barbarous epitaphs, to be
> Among the learned the theme of warm debate
> And infinite conjecture sagely wrong.

We wandered the whole day, and ended with a stroll under the lime-trees of the Place Bellecour, which my companion's guide book described as "*arbres magnifiques et ombrageux;*" but they cast no more shade than cabbages; lacking age and amplitude. A hundred years hence they will perhaps rival those which once stood in the same place till the revolution destroyed them.

On returning to our hotel, we found a military serenade going on in the court-yard by torch-light. A general lodged in the house, and 100 or more of officers were assembled in a large apartment as to a levee. The clang and cadence of the music, the flashing of torches on uniforms and accoutrements, the large ring of performers, and the hurrying to and fro of orderlies, formed to us a novel and striking spectacle, on which we gazed from our chamber windows, until, laying aside their instruments, the band sang a war song, with a spirit-stirring chorus as *finale*. Suddenly the torches dropped, followed for a few minutes by the noise of retreating footsteps; and then the summer night's silence remained undisturbed.

At five the next morning, we left Lyon by steamer for Chalons, 100 miles distant, following the course of the Saône. Soon after clearing the city, you come to a small rocky islet in the stream, which recalls Charles the Great to memory, for the famous monarch loved to resort thither in the days when

Right was right, and wrong was evil;
Truth was never then too plain:
All the heart came forth in music,
In the time of Charlemagne.

We were in high expectation, for the guide-book abovementioned described the Saône as second only to the Rhine;

those who had seen both rivers, knew not which was the most beautiful, so lively, picturesque, and *riante* was the Saône. What a mistake! Except that you see the Jura far to the east, and the hills of Charolois in another direction, and that you pass Beaujolais and other districts famous for wine, the whole route, save near Lyon, is tame enough for a Dutch landscape. But the day was fine, the motion rapid, the company gay, the *déjeuner à la fourchette* relishing, and altogether made the trip a pleasant one. There were many peculiarities, too, on the river and along the banks, worthy of attention. There was a steamer *à hélice*, but towed by horses; a steam-tug labouring up the stream with fifteen barges at its stern; a large barge dropping down laden with horses; another that seemed a huge haystack, men busily thatching it as it floated along. Then, instead of a conjurer, we had a man on board with the air, as the German said, "*d'un vrai filou;*" who opened a lottery for a trayful of books, bags, and handkerchiefs. He sold fifty tickets at a franc a-piece; and the only prize, which was won by a lady, was a prayer-book. The forty-nine losers were recommended to console themselves with the reflection that they had had a franc's worth of excitement; "*et c'est quelquechose, messieurs, quand on s'ennuie.*" Clever *filou!*

At one we reached Chalons. Most of the passengers hastened to catch the express train for Paris; we, however, waited for the third-class train at eight in the evening. We dined sumptuously, *cinq plats* and dessert for two francs; and when we paid, we refused to let the hostess reckon a two-franc piece as one franc: a trick not unfrequently practised on travellers. The German was languid and went to lie down, while I walked about to see all that was

to be seen in Chalons, and on the opposite side of the river. Had there been any portion left of the abbey of St. Marcel, where Abelard died, I might have gone to see that also, as the spot was but two miles distant.

There was a great crowd when the bell rang for the eight o'clock train. My companion gave me a Napoleon to get his ticket while he went to seek his trunk; but when I got to the ticket-window, the sovereign I offered for myself was refused: English gold being just then at a discount. Had the German not been there to lend me a Napoleon, I should have lost the train, and another day. We started at half-past eight, stopped at forty-three stations, and reached Paris at eight the next morning,—distance, 238 miles. I stayed a day to view the improvements made in the capital since my former visit, then bidding good-bye to the German, who had found an acquaintance in Paris, and no longer needed my aid, I started for Dieppe. Here, having a few days to spare, I preferred hiring a small room at a franc a night to going to an hotel; an arrangement economical in itself, and in the liberty it gave me to eat when and where I pleased. At a restaurant near the fish-market, I found all I wanted, and saw at the same time, numerous specimens of classes—peasants and fishermen—whom I should not have seen in an hotel. I saw, too, all that was to be seen in the neighbourhood, which offers scenes of great beauty and interest. A walk of a dozen or twenty miles may be taken in a different direction every day for a week, and there is a sea-bath for fourpence or for nothing, just as you please, to brace you for the task. And then I crossed the Channel, and on the last day of July landed at Newhaven, and so completed TO MONT BLANC AND BACK AGAIN.

I may add here by way of conclusion, a few words on

the cost of such a trip, the narrative of which has I trust afforded as much pleasure in the reading as I have found in the writing. The pleasure and enjoyment derived from the journey, I have said enough about and need not repeat; but when I remember that I travelled over a distance of nearly 1,900 miles, at an outlay of fifteen pounds ten shillings, and no more, I feel that the pleasure, the health, the renovated spirits, and glorious recollections which are the result, have been cheaply acquired. Eight pounds ten of the cost was for mere locomotion, steamboat, and diligence fares, the guide's fee and passport; in the remaining seven pounds my personal expenses are comprised, as nearly as possible four and sixpence a-day.

I would fain say farewell to those, who I may hope have borne me company in imagination, in the words of Feltham. "That a man may better himself by travel, he ought to observe and comment, noting as well the bad, to avoid it, as taking the good into use; and without registering these things by the pen, they will slide away unprofitably. A man would not think how much the characterizing of a thought in paper fastens it. *Litera scripta manet* has a large sense. He that does this may, when he pleaseth, rejourney all his voyage in his closet.

"But unless a man has judgment to order these aright in himself, at his return, all is in vain, and lost labour. Some men, by travel, will be changed in nothing; and some, again, will be changed too much. Indeed, the moral outside, wheresoever we be, may seem best, when something fitted to the nation we are in; but wheresoever I should go or stay, I would ever keep my God and friends unchangeably. Howsoever he returns, he makes an ill voyage that changeth his faith with his tongue and garments."

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